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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, what's your level of optimism for 2009?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

99 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

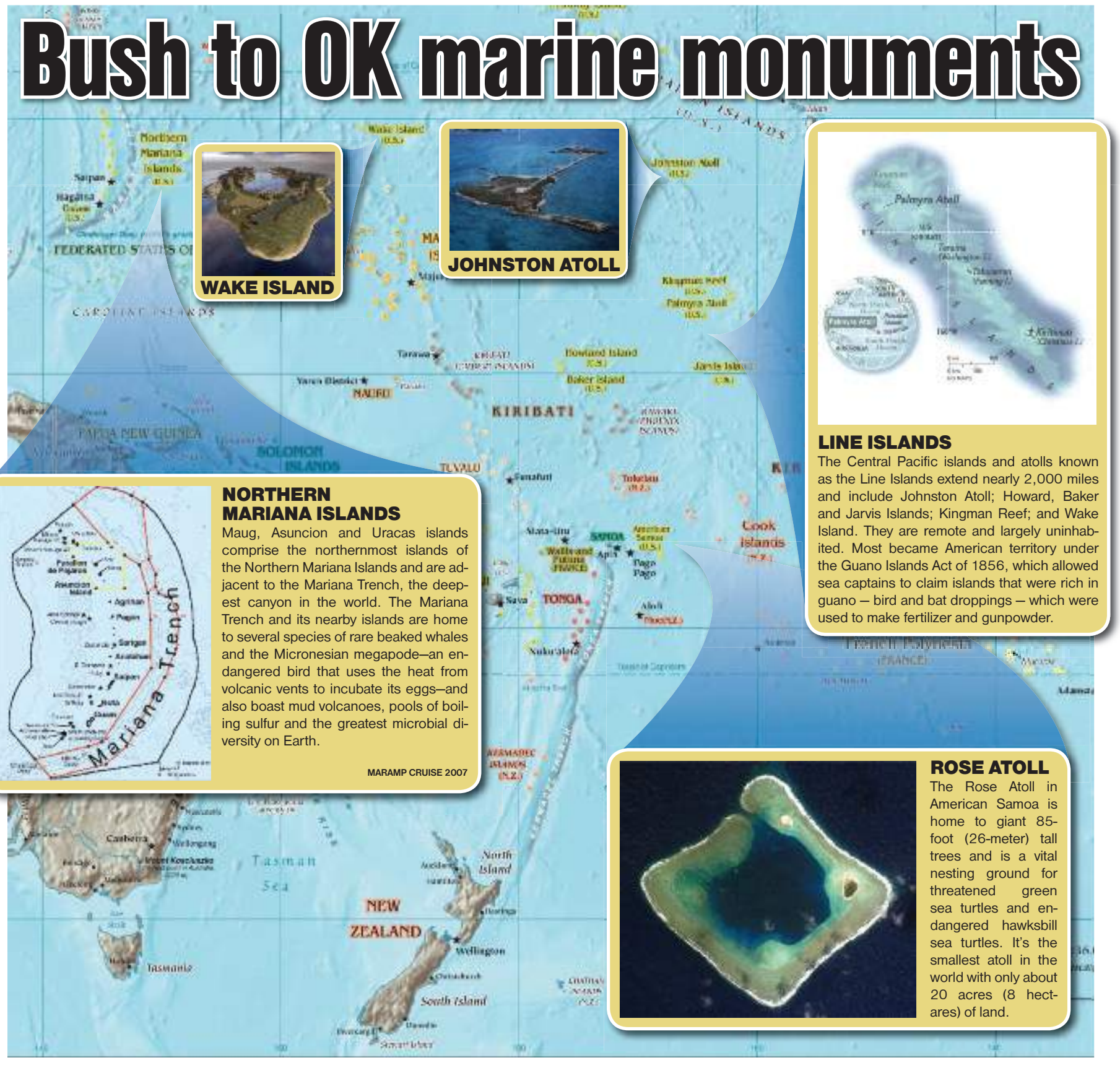
Hardline
Israel ignored international calls for a cease-fire and said it won't stop its crippling 10-day assault.

WORLD...Page 16

Memoir
First lady Laura Bush, among the most reserved and enigmatic public figures of recent times, will, at last, tell her story.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 18

Bush to OK marine monuments



NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Maug, Asuncion and Uracas islands comprise the northernmost islands of the Northern Mariana Islands and are adjacent to the Mariana Trench, the deepest canyon in the world. The Mariana Trench and its nearby islands are home to several species of rare beaked whales and the Micronesian megapode—an endangered bird that uses the heat from volcanic vents to incubate its eggs—and also boast mud volcanoes, pools of boiling sulfur and the greatest microbial diversity on Earth.

MARAMP CRUISE 2007

LINE ISLANDS
The Central Pacific islands and atolls known as the Line Islands extend nearly 2,000 miles and include Johnston Atoll; Howard, Baker and Jarvis Islands; Kingman Reef; and Wake Island. They are remote and largely uninhabited. Most became American territory under the Guano Islands Act of 1856, which allowed sea captains to claim islands that were rich in guano — bird and bat droppings — which were used to make fertilizer and gunpowder.

ROSE ATOLL
The Rose Atoll in American Samoa is home to giant 85-foot (26-meter) tall trees and is a vital nesting ground for threatened green sea turtles and endangered hawksbill sea turtles. It's the smallest atoll in the world with only about 20 acres (8 hectares) of land.

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

President George W. Bush was expected last night to designate three new areas in the Pacific as marine national monuments—including the three northernmost islands of the CNMI and the Marianas Trench—in what will be the largest marine conservation effort in history.

The three areas—totaling some 195,274 square miles (505,760 square kilometers)—include the Pacific Remote Islands National Monument (that includes Kingman Reef, Palmyra Atoll, Howland, Baker and Jarvis Islands Johnston Atoll and Wake Island); and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument in American Samoa.

Each location harbors unique species and some of the rarest geological formations on Earth—from the world's largest land crab to a bird that incubates its eggs in the heat of underwater volcanoes.

Bush, who has just 13 days to go

See BUSH on Page 4

Local

UMDA opposes 'delay tactics' by Pfaff defendants

Court filing on Jan. 5 backs August 2009 trial date order

Lawyers for the United Micronesia Development Association in a multi-million dollar lawsuit against a former UMDA director and his associates have filed an opposition to a recent attempt by defendants to question the scheduling order issued by Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja on Dec. 9, 2008.

After over 18 months of court proceedings and in response to pre-trial statements submitted by all of the parties, the Saipan Superior Court issued an order that will lead to an August 2009 trial date. UMDA brought suit against defendants Robert Pfaff, John Larson and their associates in April 2007 to recover millions of dollars in harm inflicted upon UMDA and its shareholders over a 10-year period ending in 2006.

UMDA's court filing on Jan. 5 provides a detailed rebuttal to the Pfaff defendants' objection to the court's scheduling order "and exposes the defendants' continuing attempts to obstruct discovery, abuse the meet and confer process, and delay the trial for as long as possible," according to a UMDA statement issued yesterday.

Jose Lifoifoi, chairman of the UMDA board of directors, said: "Defendants are doing everything in their power to delay their day of reckoning with the people of Micronesia. The lawyers for these convicted criminals and their cronies have been dragging their feet for almost two years, so it's no surprise that they're offering more excuses now."

Pfaff and Larson were convicted by a federal court in New York of multiple counts of tax evasion in December 2008. Pfaff is facing another trial later this year under a second indictment charging him with misusing UMDA accounts and assets for personal gain. UMDA obtained a preliminary injunction from the court in November 2007 to prevent defendants from removing over $6 million from the court's jurisdiction that rightly belongs to UMDA.

Lifoifoi said" "I want both Mr. Pfaff and Mr. Larson to know that 'they can run, but they can't hide.' I want them to know that we're not going to let them get away with the 'assault on Saipan' that Mr. Larson talked about to his lawyers before this case started. We are doing everything we can to recover the money rightfully belonging to UMDA shareholders that's been hidden away in tax shelters, offshore entities and shell companies all over the world. After years of deception, the truth is finally coming out."

In the pending action in the CNMI Superior Court, UMDA has sued Pfaff and Larson as well as several of their affiliates, including Rothschild Trust (Guernsey) LTD., Davina, G.E.T. Realty Trust, Laramie Fealty LLC, Concorde Trust and others.

UMDA was founded in 1966 in Saipan. Its shareholders include the government or governmental entities of the CNMI, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, and thousands of individual Micronesians and their families. In December 2007 UMDA announced the purchase from JAL Group of the Hotel Nikko Saipan, a 313-room luxury hotel in Saipan. ***(PR)***

Tinian's dog control program issues its 400th dog tag

The Tinian Dog Control Program issued its 400th dog tag on Jan. 2, 2009.

The tag was issued to Shadow, a dog owned by Mike Cabrera and his son, Christopher John Hofschneider.

Bill Cing, senior adviser for the Tinian Mayor's Office, said this is "quite an accomplishment" for a small community like Tinian.

However, there are still more unlicensed or stray dogs that are roaming the island. "The Tinian Mayor's office is once again reminding the public to register their dog(s) and to tie them up for the safety of the public," Cing said.

An unregistered loose dog carries a minimum $200 fine.

Cing said the Dog Control Program office will be conducting night patrols to enforce these regulations and will be issuing citation to violators.

"It has come to our attention that some dog owners are letting their dogs loose at night and then tying them up again the next morning," Cing said. "The law states that all dogs must be secure at all times, it doesn't matter whether it is registered or not."

"With our economic situation, we do not wish to cite anyone. Call the [Tinian] Mayor's Office and make an appointment and we will be glad to assist you," he added.

For more information, call the Tinian Mayor's Office at 433-1800. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mike Cabrera and his son, Christopher John Hofschneider, pose with Shadow, left, and Rocky, right. Christopher is shown proudly displaying Shadow's dog tag #400 and registration papers.

Begonia Odoshi Camacho
P.O. Box 503960
Saipan, MP 96950

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re The Matter Of The Petition To Appoint General Guardianship For:	FCD GU CIVIL ACTION NO. 08-0727
A. D. O. C, Minor Child	**NOTICE OF HEARING**
By: Mariana Odoshi Jardine, Petitioner	

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on January 12, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 205, before the Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo.

Dated this 24th day of December, 2008.

Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

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CNMI GOVERNMENT

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OPENING DATE: JANUARY 16, 2009 • TIME: 10:30 A.M.

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/s/ **ELOY S. INOS**
SECRETARY OF FINANCE

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

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High surf seen until tonight–EMO

A high surf advisory remains in effect in the CNMI until 6pm today, Jan. 7, due to large north swells from a storm east of Japan a few days ago that continue to move through the area.

High surf will affect exposed reefs and beaches on north and west facing reefs producing dangerous rip currents.

The Emergency Management Office warned the public to expect hazardous surf of 9-11 feet on north facing reefs and 7-9 feet on west facing reefs through Wednesday. The surf is expected to subside below hazardous levels tonight.

"Due to the rising seas and surf in our region, [EMO] is strongly advising the public—especially beachgoers, fishermen, tourist, swimmers, divers and surfers—that there will be a high risk of rip currents along north facing reefs. Rip currents can be life threatening to anyone entering the water," EMO said in a statement. ***(EMO)***

Tinian, Managaha get green flags

The Division of Environmental Quality analyzed water samples collected from Tinian's recreational beaches and storm water drainage this week as part of routine sampling.

None of the samples collected contained excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria nor did they exceed the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. DEQ assigned all of the sampled beach sites a green flag.

The division also assigned a green flag to Managaha Island's recreational beaches and dock after routine sampling showed that none of the samples contained excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria.

The division analyzed sampled of marine recreational and storm drainage water from 10 locations on Tinian this week. On Managaha, it obtained a total of 11samples.

Marine Water Quality Reports are also provided at www.deq.gov.mp/section.aspx?secID=4 and http://www.cnmicoralreef.net/wq/beachcloseweeklyresults.htm. Interested individuals and organizations may receive e-mail notifications of the weekly marine water quality reports. To do so, send an email to environment@deq.gov.mp.

For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

3 remaining garment firms to close down

Uno Moda, US CNMI Development, MGM notify Labor about shutdown

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The three remaining garment manufacturers on Saipan will shut down operations by February 2009, Saipan Tribune learned yesterday.

Uno Moda Corp. Garment Factory, US CNMI Development Corp. and Marianas Garment Manufacturing have already informed Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas about their intention to close their factories.

Uno Moda Corp. is closing down on Jan. 31 while U.S. CNMI Development Corp. and MGM are officially shutting down on Feb. 7.

Uno Moda Corp. general manager Won Gun Bak recently notified San Nicolas that their factory is closing down on Jan. 31, but that they had already informed their workers on Nov. 29, 2008, about the management's decision.

Uno Moda has a total of 228 alien workers and 55 resident workers, for a total of 283 employees.

Bak said airline tickets for the workers' repatriation will be provided while those workers who want to transfer to other employers will be given assistance for the processing of documents.

"It is very difficult to continue our operations since our buyers moved to another place and our orders ceased and it affected our productions," said Bak in his letter to San Nicolas.

US CNMI Development Corp. general manager William Fong and MGM deputy general manager Zeng Gengzin said the factories ceased active garment manufacturing last Dec. 8, but they are officially closing on Feb. 7.

In their separate but similar letters to San Nicolas, Fong and Gengzin said the corporations will continue to exist and that it is anticipated that they will keep their import and export licenses active.

All their workers, they said, were already given written notices about the closure.

In 2008, eight garment factories, including the big United International Corp., shut down operations, affecting over a thousand nonresident and resident workers.

The CNMI used to have 34 garment factories, all located on Saipan, contributing some $60 million in direct taxes a year to the local government.

Many of those factories reportedly started ceasing operations in January 2005 when the World Trade Organization lifted trade quotas.

Legislature looking at legality of budget veto override

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Legislature is looking at possibly overriding the governor's veto of the 2009 budget, despite some legal concerns.

Several members of the Legislature held a closed-door meeting yesterday to discuss possible options regarding Gov. Benigno Fitial's veto of the $165.4-million budget. Members present were Maria T. Pangelinan, chairwoman of the Senate's Fiscal Affairs committee; House Speaker Arnold Palacios; Ray Yumul, chairman on the House's Ways and Means Committee; House Vice Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero, Rep. Heinz Hofschneider, Rep. Diego Benavente, and Rep. Tina Sablan. The Legislature's legal counsels were also present.

Fitial vetoed the budget Dec. 24, citing a drop of $8.7 million in the Finance Department's revised revenue estimate. To cope with the revenue decline, Fitial announced a 5.5-percent budget cut to all agencies starting Jan. 1 and lasting through the end of the 2009 fiscal year.

Because of the timing of the veto and the Legislature's inability to reconvene, there are some constitutional questions on whether a veto can be overridden, Sablan said after the meeting. The Constitution prohibits the Legislature from increasing budgets beyond the governor's revenue projections, she said, adding that it's not clear if overriding the veto would amount to such an increase.

"On the other hand, some members argued the Legislature's power to override the governor's veto and enact law is absolute. We have that absolute authority. That's a check the people put in place," Sablan said.

If the veto is overridden, Sablan said the governor still retains power to proportionately make reductions that have to be in place if there are still unexpected shortfalls in revenues.

If the Legislature does veto the bill, as is the most likely option according to Sablan, the legislative members would also be working on a concurrent resolution and budget bill that incorporates the governor's revisions, which would ultimately put any constitutional issues to rest.

That system would be the best option to immediately establish strict controls on spending and requirements for accountability, the representative said.

She said going on continuing resolution with the previous budget would be the worst thing to do.

"It's disappointing Fitial vetoed the budget, especially with the hard work both houses put in and the fact that the committees worked with the Secretary of Finance closely," Sablan said.

Finance Secretary Eloy Inos commended the Legislature yesterday for their hard work, but said there are just not enough resources currently to work with the original budget.

55 drunk drivers arrested in Dec.

A total of 55 persons were arrested for drunk driving last December on Saipan, bringing the total number of DUI arrests in 2008 to 219.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro told Saipan Tribune yesterday that the checkpoints set up by DPS in December resulted in the arrest of five persons for drunk driving.

Ogumoro said two other persons were arrested for DUI at checkpoints set up by the police on New Year's Day.

Nine persons were killed in vehicular accidents on Saipan last year. As of yesterday, DPS had yet to confirm as to how many of those victims died in alcohol-related crashes.

Ogumoro said she is trying to get the records for 2007 with respect to DUI arrests.

DPS reported in late November 2007 that beginning January up to October that year, there were 227 DUI arrests on Saipan, one on Tinian, and one on Rota.

In the same period in 2006, 354 people were arrested for DUI in the CNMI and there was one pedestrian who died as a result of an intoxicated driver.

In 2005, there were 414 DUI arrests in the CNMI and five alcohol-related fatalities. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Sablan begins his first day

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Today marks a historical day for many reasons in the CNMI. While most residents are sleeping, events taking place thousands of miles away in Washington D.C. will have a profound impact on the CNMI's future.

Not only is President Bush poised to designate the Marianas Trench monument, Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan is set to be sworn in as the CNMI's first-ever delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives.

He will join other new members as they are sworn in, and the 111th Congress convenes for the first time.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, outgoing CNMI Resident Rep. Pete A. Tenorio and Sablan's family are some of the many people that are planned to be on hand to witness the event.

"It is an honor to be representing the people of the Northern Marianas on this historic day," Sablan said in a statement. "And I am particularly thankful that so many of the CNMI's leaders have chosen to recognize the importance of this day by traveling to Washington to be present."

On Monday Sablan opened his office in Washington D.C. and named his initial staff members.

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BUSH

From Page 4

before turning over the nation's reins to President-elect Barrack Obama on Jan. 20, will make the designations using his authority under the Antiquities Act, instead of going to the process of marine protected areas that requires U.S. Congress approval.

The move will prohibit commercial fishing and other extractive uses around these areas. However, recreational fishing, tourism and scientific research with a federal permit could still occur inside the three areas. The designations will also not conflict with U.S. military activities or freedom of navigation, White House officials said.

James Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, announced Bush's approval of the proposal the day before the President's actual signing of the designation.

The plan resulted in a slew of articles in *Newsday*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York, Times*, CNN, BBC, and wire services such as The Associated Press and Agence France Press.

According to transcripts of the briefing, a copy of which was obtained by *Saipan Tribune*, Connaughton said that Bush's action will cap off an eight-year comprehensive ocean conservation strategy that involves the "largest areas of ocean or ocean seabed set aside as marine protected areas in the world."

Fishing rights

Here at home, press secretary Charles Reyes said that Gov. Benigno R. Fitial appreciates the federal government's respect for indigenous fishing rights. Fitial and most members of the CNMI Legislature have strongly opposed the proposal due to fears that island residents would lose access and rights to the designated areas.

Fitial is in Washington D.C. primarily to attend the swearing in of the CNMI's first elected Delegate to the U.S. Congress, Gregorio Kilili Sablan.

Reyes said that Fitial is working closely with the CNMI Senate President and the House Speaker to address the marine monument concerns and he is dealing directly with Connaughton.

"The Governor is in Washington, DC, right now, and he is meeting directly with Mr. Connaughton to ensure the best possible outcome for the CNMI—one that meets the CNMI's needs and addresses the CNMI government's concerns," Reyes said.

Officers and some members of the Friends of the Monument, the most active supporters of the project, are also expected to join the President during the official declaration.

End of an era

In a statement, the Pew Environment Group, which spearheaded the campaign for the inclusion of the CNMI in the marine monument declaration, lauded Bush for his action even before the announcement came.

It said this historic move protects some of the world's most unique and biologically significant ocean habitats.

Joshua S. Reichert, managing director of the group, said this marks the end of an era in which humans have increasingly understood the need to conserve vanishing wild places on land but failed to comprehend the similar plight of oceans.

"It comes none too soon, " Reichert said.

Saipan Tribune tried to obtain comments from Public Lands Secretary John DelRosario, Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Ignacio Dela Cruz, House Speaker Arnold Palacios and Senate President Pete Reyes but all were attending important meetings late in the afternoon.

Connaughton, who visited the CNMI over a month ago to consult with the government and the people, assured that the designation would prevent the destruction of some of the nation's and the world's most pristine natural resources that are also enormously rich in biodiversity.

"The conservation action is going to benefit the public and future generations through enhanced science, knowledge and awareness, and just good old-fashioned inspiration, because these places are exceptionally dynamic when it comes to the marine environment," Connaughton said.

Components

There will be two main components for the CNMI monument: First is the Marianas Trench, the world's deepest underwater canyon. The monument will only protect the rim of the canyon and its depths. At 36,201 feet (11,035 meters) the canyon is deeper than Mt. Everest is tall, five times the size of the Grand Canyon and several times wider, according to estimates done by scientists.

The second component is the long arch of submerged active volcanoes and hydrothermal vents that run along the entire Marianas Island chain. There are about 21 active volcanoes and thermal vents that run along the island chain. These emit hot thermal gases in the bottom of the sea, as deep as 5,000 feet.

One of these volcanoes, Connaughton noted, is responsible for a sulfur pool, the second one known ever. The only other sulfur pool is on the moon of Jupiter called Io.

"The thermal vents produce heat from the core of the Earth that boils the water to very, very high temperatures, and also makes the water highly acidic. In one place, the water is a pH of one. And yet in this very, very harsh environment, you have thriving, living resources—something we want to learn a lot more about," Connaguton said.

Another concern was the preservation of the pristine coral reef ecosystems that surrounds the CNMI's three northernmost islands of Uracas, Maug and Asuncion.

Implementation system

Over the course of the next two years, the federal government will be directing the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior in cooperation with the governments of the CNMI, Guam and American Samoa to develop management plans to come up with strategic implementation.

"This is a huge day for marine conservation. It's going to set yet another great mark for America as we inspire marine conservation activities all around the world," Connaugton said.

Reacting to questions whether, the President will scale down the areas, Connaughton said they have crafted a truly massive conservation outcome "and we've crafted it in a way that was able to take into account—and in many instances—simply explain away most of the concerns" from NGO, community and citizens of the CNMI.

He conceded that CNMI government officials raised legitimate issues but "I think you'll find out that when we finally put pen to paper and crafted this large conservation outcome, we did so in a way that those government officials will now—are now very pleased to fully support."

He said they have taken into account the issues on cultural heritage and have come up with an approach similar to what happened in Hawaii.

The CNMI government, he said, will be sure to pay close attention to the desires of people to engage in indigenous practices in these areas and be sure that those are legitimately undertaken.

"We just needed to work through that until we spelled it out [and] folks are going to wait to agree until we spelled it out."

Mineral exploration

On the issue of the potential for minerals development and the conservation actions, he said that based on consultation with scientists, the areas where minerals are likely going to be are not the areas that "we are looking to conserve."

He added that there is no significant potential for recoverable resources in the Marianas Trench.

He said: "Nobody in his right mind is going to go looking for minerals in the middle of a volcano that's active or in the middle of a thermal vent with a pH of one."

He said this was a great example where they have done the science and that they were able to actually take an issue off the table because it wasn't relevant at all.

He said the federal government is interested in protecting the geologic and natural resource features of the seabed in the Marianas Trench, the volcanoes, and amazing amount of marine life in and around them.

On commercial fishing, he said this issue wasn't really relevant to the resource that the federal government is working to protect.

"Most of these area are not very productive for commercial fishing in any event," he said.

Regarding monitoring and enforcement in the Marianas, Connaughton said the areas are challenging in itself "so there's an embedded enforcement of just the difficulty of going there."

Legacy

Today's designation means that Bush will have protected more square miles of ocean than any person in history. In 2006 Bush created the Papahanaumokuakea Marine National Monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, an area of 138,000 square miles. At the time, that area was the largest conservation area in the world.

The three areas designated today are larger, and came with some opposition. Northern Mariana Islands government officials and indigenous communities initially objected to the monument designation, citing concerns about sovereignty, fishing and mineral exploration.

Environmentalists were hoping for more. The protected areas will extend 50 nautical miles off the coral reefs and atolls at the three monuments, which will be officially called the Marianas Marine National Monument, Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, and the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument.

Advocacy groups were pushing for 200 nautical miles, the full extent of the U.S. exclusive economic zone. Commercial fishing will also still be allowed in the waters over the Mariana Trench, the world's deepest underwater canyon. The monument will only protect the rim of the canyon and its depths.

"Commercial fishing was not relevant to the resource we wanted to protect," Connaughton said. He also said the science did not support protecting the full 200 nautical miles.

Special places

The move is a boost to the environmental record of a president who has been criticized for not doing enough against air pollution and global warming. He also lifted a moratorium on oil and gas drilling off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

It will be up to President-elect Obama to hammer out how the areas will be managed, and to make sure the prohibitions are enforced.

"We and others in the environmental community have been at odds with this administration on lots of things, but if one looks at this one event it is a significant conservation event," said Pew's Reichert.

"In a more symbolic level, it sends a message that we have finally arrived at a point where we are beginning to think about the sea in the same way we have thought about the land—that there are special places under threat that need to be protected," Reichert said.

The protection of the Mariana Trench comes a century after President Theodore Roosevelt first protected the Grand Canyon as a national monument in 1908.

In Pago Pago, American Samoa, the U.S. territory's Gov. Togiola T.A. Tulafono said Monday that the designation of Rose Atoll as a national monument will attract research scientists. ***(With Associated Press)***

Official: National security part of agenda on marine monument

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Although conservation was the main drumbeat for the marine monument proposal, which President Bush was expected to announce last night, national security is also part of the agenda.

This is according to James Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, during a briefing on the eve of Bush's official announcement on the fate of the three designated monuments.

The designation of 195,000 square miles of ocean waters in three Pacific areas covers the Marianas Marine Monument in the CNMI, Pacific Remote Islands National Monument (Kingman Reef; Palmyra Atoll; Howland, Baker and Jarvis Islands; Johnstoll Atoll and Wake Island); and the Rose Atoll National Monument in American Samoa.

Connaughton said the President's action is going "to conserve these places in the future in a way that also fully respects our nation's security needs."

A separate statement will be issued by the White House on this national security measures in the future.

However, Connaughton said, such action would ensure that freedom of navigation for all vessels in accordance with international law is in place.

Also, such a move would ensure that the U.S. armed force could stay ready and be globally mobile.

"So we'll be focused on a strategy that enables us to do both," Connaughton said.

He said Bush would be incorporating specific measures that will fully provide for training readiness and global mobility for the U.S. military as well as "ensure navigation rights and high seas freedoms under the Law of the Sea for all vessels,"

These, he said, are essential to stabilizing peace and prosperity for all civilized nations.

"So we will be able to afford high levels of protection and, at the same time, respect international law when it comes to navigational freedoms, which is very important as we undertake these conservation activities in the marine environment," he said.

The White House also assured that such conservation effort should not be used as a reason to bar navigation.

"But in terms of the effect it will have, we will be able to achieve the full and highest levels of protection for the marine environment through a well-managed and well-regulated set of management practices," Connaugton stressed.

He also pointed out that there are already monuments in the Pacific that are fully compatible with future plans for military readiness training.

Such areas, he said, are also compatible with the readiness and mobility needed for the U.S. military and are ready for intelligence purposes.

"We actually welcome the presence of the military in and around the monument because they will be some of our best eyes and ears as to what's going on with the resource," he said.

For instance, he said that, as the U.S. builds up its military forces in Guam, there would be opportunities for military personnel to actually learn more about the resources.

He said the military will be flying their missions, and sailing their ships and running their submarines in an around these areas.

He said he want to observe the active military activity that will be taking place south of the Northern Islands.

CADA reports 'minimal' drop in sales in 2008

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Automobile sales dropped slightly by 5.85 percent in calendar year 2008, as the Commonwealth Auto Dealers Association sold 595 units last year compared to 632 in the January-December period in 2007.

Brennan

CADA spokesman Douglas Brennan said the group remains optimistic despite the drop in sales last year.

"All things considered, the 2007 to 2008 drop of 5.85 percent is minimal when compared to recent declines in some other local industries and the double-digit declines in the local auto market from the previous two years. I think CADA as a whole did an admirable job staying close to even with 2007 sales figures. I hope we do as well or better in 2009," he said.

The 595 automobiles driven off the showrooms and parking lots of Microl Corp., Joeten Motors, and Triple J Motors were made up of 323 cars, 59 trucks, 45, vans, 162 sport utility vehicles, and six Blue Bird school busses.

Microl Corp. continued to lord it over its two competitors in 2008—selling 283 units to give the San Jose dealership a 47.56 percent share of the market. In all, Microl Corp. sold 178 cars, 15 trucks, 25 vans, and 65 SUVs in 2008.

MARK RABAGO
Commonwealth Auto Dealers Association reported a 5.85-percent drop in sales in calendar year 2008.

It was a 1.39-percent drop in unit sales in 2007, which saw Microl Corp. unload 287 units.

Joeten Motors is second in the number of units sold last year at 192, which translates to 32.27 percent of the market. The Oleai dealership went on to sell 81 cars, 37 trucks, 16 vans, and 58 SUVs last year.

Total units sold last year represent a 7.87-percent increase in sales from 2007, which saw Joeten Motors sell only 178 automobiles.

Triple J Motors sold a total of 120 automobiles last year—made up of 64 cars, seven trucks, four vans, and 39 SUVs—for a 20.17-percent share of market.

In 2007, Triple J Motors sold 167 units, which means the company experienced a 28.14-percent drop in sales in 2008.

Microl Corp. sells Toyota and Chevrolet, while Joeten Motors sells Nissan, Ford, Honda, and Kia. Triple J Motors sells Hyundai, Mitsubishi, Isuzu, Suzuki, Subaru, and Mazda.

Expert: Businesses, homes could save 30 percent on energy saving measures

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

By following the example of others who have been successful in cutting their expenses by using cost-efficient energy systems, island residents and businesses could save up to 30 percent on their utility bills, according to an energy expert.

"Smart energy solutions should focus on how to make power at a lower cost to us. A 30 percent reduction is very possible if we know how to do it properly," said Casey C. Conner, chief executive officer of Conner Inc.

Conner, the guest speaker at yesterday's Rotary Club of Saipan at the Hyatt Regency, spoke of ways on how the CNMI could cope with the power outages and rising cost of fuel and utilities.

He advised hotels to use cost-saving measures such as LED lighting products, which must be installed in bedrooms and restrooms. When the lights go off, these LED lighting will glow and automatically produce navigational lights.

In this way, he said, there is no need for switching these on.

He also advised the use of electric fans from time to time, rather than relying on air conditioning units all the time.

As an example, Conner cited the Century Hotel along Middle Road, which he said has been successful in saving a lot of money by installing energy saving heaters and other measures.

Conner said the hotel reported a savings of $5,000 a month after implementing such cost-saving methods.

He also cited the new building of the Commonwealth Health Center, where lighting and other systems are controlled by computers through sensors that are installed around the building.

"Better design of the building is the main explanation for this. There is a lot of insulation in there," he said.

Conner said they saw a huge reduction in energy cost at the new building, from $2 to nine cents per square foot.

He said technology is moving forward to help reduce costs and everyone should save a great deal when applying the benefits of solar energy.

CUC stipulation time-frame pushed back

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has granted an extension to the comment period regarding two stipulations between the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The extension of the comment period will mean the timeframe CUC must follow in the stipulations will also be pushed back.

The stipulations were filed along with a lawsuit against CUC, compelling it to adhere to federal regulations governing water, sewer, power and fuel.

The 30-day comment period was scheduled to end Jan. 2, but the District Court extended the period after a comment was left asking for an extension.

The DOJ, EPA and CUC signed the orders in July, but the DOJ did not file the orders and lawsuit until November. The initial comment period began Dec. 2.

Under the agreement, CUC must draft a master plan, obtain a contractor, and allow public comment on the plan.

Also, CUC must fill several positions as part of a wastewater management team.

CUC is required to turn in several plans to EPA on water sampling and monitoring.

"Within 90 days after the entry date, CUC shall develop and submit to EPA for approval a detailed plan, including a detailed schedule, to either install treatment at Tanapag Springs and Achugao Springs, or to disconnect those sources from the drinking water systems and provide an alternative supply of drinking water," the agreement states.

CUC must also turn in a plan that will detail how it will perform samplings and where sampling will take place.

There have been problems with CUC conducting sampling tests in the past. According to their July 2008 report, CUC did not complete all tests for contaminants in 2007.

The agency failed to complete all monitoring or tests for cryptosporidium, synthetic organic chemicals, and volatile organic contaminants.

If certain stipulations are not met, CUC can be penalized up to $1,000 per day per violation for the first 30 days; $2,000 per day per violation following the 30 days; and $5,000 per day per violation for each day after.

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Atalig says he spent 6,108 hours in Malite probate

Lawyer insists that billing is equivalent to $2.1M

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

From 1995 to 2007, attorney Antonio M. Atalig provided 6,108 hours of legal services to the Angel Malite estate, equivalent to $2.1 million in attorney's fees, according to a report the lawyer submitted to the CNMI Superior Court.

Atalig's statement indicated that from 1995 to 2000 he spent 1,208.5 hours on the case, equal to $271,912.50 in attorney's fees. From 2001 to 2007, the lawyer claimed that his rendered hours reached 4,899.5, translating to $271,912.50 in attorney's fees.

The combined total amount is $2,109,225.

Atalig explained that the statement he submitted is the revised version of fees as required by the Superior Court.

He noted that costs such as telephone, fax, copying and other office expenses are not even included in the revised version.

Atalig and attorney Reynaldo O. Yana, who assisted him in the probate, have been in jail for nine months since March 2008 when Superior Court associate judge Kenneth Govendo found them in civil contempt for failing to return the $1.3 million they got as attorneys' fees in the Malite probate.

During Monday's hearing, Govendo ordered the temporary release of the two lawyers from detention until the next hearing on Jan. 16.

At the hearing, Govendo said he will review the documents, including the hourly billings, submitted by the two lawyers.

The judge asked whether Atalig will ask for $2.1 million in attorney's fees since the Malite estate got only $3.4 million.

Atalig said no. He said their submission showing that they should actually be receiving $2.1 million in billing rather than $1.3 million was to show the court the number of hours they actually spent on this probate.

Govendo said that, based on his initial review of the documents, he is not satisfied and that the next hearing will be another opportunity for the two lawyers to explain.

Atalig told *Saipan Tribune* after Monday's hearing that the Malite estate started with $3,000 only but, due to their efforts, it eventually got $3.4 million.

Atalig also noted that the contingency fee was based on the Malite family's decision.

The lawyer for the heir claimants, Stephen Nutting, said most of the entries that the two lawyers submitted appear to be "very excessive."

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Amendment of the Commonwealth's Consolidated Plan for Program Year 2005-2009
(This advertisement is paid for with CDBG funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.)

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the amendment of the Commonwealth's Consolidated Plan for Program Year 2005-2009. The amendment provides the inclusion of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) which will be made available to the Commonwealth by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Intended use of the NSP grant is described as follows:

Priority	Activity Type	Use of funds
NSP Purchase	The purchase and rehabilitation of homes and residential properties owned by banks/lending institutions that have been abandoned or foreclosed upon in the various villages of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, in order to sell such homes to eligible Low, Moderate, and Middle-Income homebuyers. [HERA §2301(c)(3)(B)]	At least 90% of NSP funds will be allocated to NSP Purchase and NSP Financing Activities
NSP Program and Administration Costs	Program and Administrative Costs	Up to 10% of NSP funds

Total NSP Allocation: $364,162.00. All NSP funds shall be used to benefit individuals and families whose incomes do not exceed 120 percent of area median income. At least 25% of NSP funds will be used to purchase and rehabilitate homes that will be sold to eligible homebuyers whose incomes are at or below 50 percent of the area median income. The CNMI's income limits for NSP are published at http://www.huduser.org/publications/commdevl/nsp.html under Pacific Islands.

The NSP program also establishes the following affordability requirements:

NSP funds invested per Unit	Minimum length of the Affordability Period
Less than $15,000	5 years
$15,000- $40,000	10 years
More than $40,000	15 years

The Amended Plan is available for public review and inspection at NMHC's Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, and at the respective NMHC Field Offices in Tinian and Rota during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays. Written comments must be received by NMHC **no later than 4:30 p.m., January 10, 2009, at our designated NMHC branches.**

NMHC does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to or treatment or employment of individuals under its programs or activities. NMHC has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Section 504, the ADA, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 504 regulations implemented by the EEOC and the Department of Justice. NMHC will make necessary arrangements for persons with disabilities. If you should require any additional information or need special accommodations, please contact Zenie P. Mafnas, Planner/Grant Writer at 234-6866.

/s/ Joshua T. Sasamoto
Corporate Director

NMI Humanities Council awards $15,000 grants

The NMI Council for the Humanities recently awarded two community grants to support local humanities projects.

The African American Cultural Preservation Committee was awarded a $5,000 grant to undertake several activities to mark the third annual Martin Luther King Day in the CNMI. This year the Commonwealth will observe MLK Day on Monday, Jan. 19.

Major activities include a series of lectures by noted civil rights activist Marsha Joyner who will speak at schools and other public venues on Saipan, Tinian and Rota, a student elocution contest with the theme "What Would Martin Say?," a commemorative mini-march, and a public exhibit of Martin Luther King memorabilia.

Joyner's lectures will address the theme "The Color of Unity the Pacific Way." She will explore the roots of racism and the struggle for civil equality in the United States and will consider the socio-political significance of the recent election of Barack Obama as President of the United States.

The NMI Council also awarded a $10,000 grant to Horse Opera Productions to complete a documentary film titled *Insular Empire: America in the Mariana Islands.*

This documentary explores the historical events that led to the American presence in the Marianas and how this presence continues to impact the lives of indigenous residents of the archipelago.

The one-hour film uses archival photos, film clips and first person accounts to tell the story of America's insular empire in the Marianas. The film presents the perspectives of four prominent individuals, two each from Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

They include former Lt. Governor and Washington Representative Pedro A. Tenorio and cultural preservationist Lino M. Olopai from the CNMI; and World War II veteran and former legislature Carlos P. Taitano and former senator Hope Cristobal from Guam.

Upon completion, *The Insular Empire* will be broadcast nationally on PBS and at local venues in the CNMI and Guam.

Anyone wishing to learn more about these projects or about the NMI Council's Community Grants Program may contact Council staff at 235-4785 or visit its website at www.nmihumanities.org. ***(PR)***

SHIPPING SCHEDULE

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MELL SENOKO	015E	12/27 Sat	12/25 Thu	12/25 Thu	12/23 Tue	12/20 Sat	1/2 Fri	12/29 Mon	12/28 Sun	12/21 Sun	12/21 Sun	12/29 Mon	1/2 Fri	1/4 Sun	1/6 Tue
MELL SENTOSA	014E	1/3 Sat	1/1 Thu	1/1 Thu	12/30 Tue	12/27 Sat	1/9 Fri	1/5 Mon	1/4 Sun	12/28 Sun	12/28 Sun	1/5 Mon	1/9 Fri	1/11 Sun	1/13 Tue
STADT HAMBURG	028E	1/10 Sat	1/8 Thu	1/8 Thu	1/6 Tue	1/3 Sat	1/16 Fri	1/12 Mon	1/11 Sun	1/4 Sun	1/4 Sun	1/12 Mon	1/16 Fri	1/18 Sun	1/20 Tue
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MELL SENTOSA	015E	1/24 Sat	1/22 Thu	1/22 Thu	1/20 Tue	1/17 Sat	1/30 Fri	1/26 Mon	1/25 Sun	1/18 Sun	1/18 Sun	1/26 Mon	1/30 Fri	2/1 Sun	2/3 Tue
STADT HAMBURG	029E	1/31 Sat	1/29 Thu	1/29 Thu	1/27 Tue	1/24 Sat	2/6 Fri	2/2 Mon	2/1 Sun	1/25 Sun	1/25 Sun	2/2 Mon	2/6 Fri	2/8 Sun	2/10 Tue

Inbound from Asia	Voyage No.	ETA Guam	ETD Guam	ETA Saipan	ETA Yap	ETA Koror	ETA GenSan	ETA Davao	ETA Cebu	ETA Hongkong	ETA Kaoshiung	ETA Busan	ETA Yokohama	ETA Manila	ETA Singapore
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MELL SENTOSA	015E	2/7 Sat	2/8 Sun	2/8 Sun	SKIP	2/12 Thu	2/14 Sat	2/15 Sun	2/17 Tue	2/20 Fri	2/21 Sat	2/26 Thu	3/17 Tue	3/15 Sun	2/25 Wed
STADT HAMBURG	029E	2/14 Sat	2/15 Sun	2/15 Sun	2/17 Tue	2/19 Thu	2/22 Sun	2/23 Mon	2/25 Wed	2/27 Fri	2/28 Sat	3/5 Thu	3/24 Tue	3/22 Sun	3/4 Wed

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Kumoi launches bid for gubernatorial post

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Former senator Ramon "Kumoi" S. Guerrero has thrown his hat into the 2009 gubernatorial race.

Guerrero, who had also served as executive director of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., said he actually made his decision to run for governor in early December.

"The problems we're facing today are right in front of us. It's telling us how to solve it. We've been playing politics all the time. Politics…everything is politics. We cannot solve this problem by playing politics. We have to go straightforward. We just cannot play this game anymore," he said in a telephone interview yesterday with the *Saipan Tribune*.

The former lawmaker said he wants to be the CNMI next governor because he wants to help the people of the Commonwealth have a better life.

"How many candidates are running for governor who are in office. What more can they promise? People are suffering. What else can they do? The people are suffering and I want to help. I've been there and I want to help."

Guerrero

"It's going to be interesting. It's about time for a change. In fact that's the slogan I'm using—'Time for a change.'"

Guerrero said he will run as an independent candidate and will meet with supporters in Jan. 23, 6pm at his As Perdido home to strategize and plan his campaign.

Guerrero said among the decisions that will be made during the tete-a-tete will be the group's choice for his running mate.

"What's going to happen is I'm asking for my group, all the supporters, and the public to recommend names on who will be my running mate. This hasn't been done before. I want to get feedback from the public as to who will be the best choice for my running mate," he said.

Guerrero's decision to run follows last month's declarations by former Lt. Gov. Diego Benavente and local businessman Joe Ayuyu that they too will contest the islands' highest position.

Incumbent Gov. Benigno R. Fitial already announced last March 2008 that he will seek reelection in 2009.

A fifth possible gubernatorial candidate is businessman and former congressman and senator Juan "Pan" Guerrero.

He confirmed that he indeed is exploring the possibility of running for governor this year but has yet to make a final decision.

Police eye third suspect in armed robbery

Police have learned that there were three persons involved in the armed robbery that occurred at a store in San Vicente on New Year's Eve.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said yesterday it was the third suspect who hit a male employee of C.Y.C. San Vicente Store with a blunt object on his chest.

Ogumoro said the employee, a 49-year-old Chinese, was treated by responding medics, but he refused to be taken to the hospital.

The other victim, a 22-year-old Chinese woman, is the store's cashier. She was not hurt.

Saipan Tribune earlier learned from the store owner that the employee who was attacked was a maintenance worker.

Earlier initial reports indicated that the robbery happened on New Year's Day and that there were two suspects, both wearing masks.

Ogumoro said yesterday that, on Dec. 31 at 11:34pm, DPS received a report about an armed robbery that happened at C.Y.C. San Vicente Store.

The DPS spokesperson said preliminary investigation showed that two masked male individuals, both armed with knives, entered the store and demanded money from the cashier.

The two suspects were described as wearing brown long sleeved shirts and khaki-colored masks.

The male employee, who was in the store's warehouse, heard the cashier shouting. As soon as he exited the warehouse to check on the cashier, the third suspect struck him with a blunt object on the chest.

Ogumoro said all three suspects fled on foot with an undetermined amount of cash and some merchandise.

According to the store owner, who requested not to be identified, the maintenance worker collapsed after the attack.

The store owner said the robbery happened in less than five minutes. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Three ask for Tudela's support for candidacy

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

With still nine months left before the general elections in November, three aspirants have already approached Mayor Juan B. Tudela to ask for his support to succeed him.

Tudela

Tudela, who will complete his two full year terms this year, said, however, that he has not yet decided whom to support as his successor.

He expects more interested candidates to approach him to get his backing.

According to information the Mayor gathered recently, there are some eight individuals who want to run for the position.

Those who have personally talked to him to ask for his support include former Secretary of the Department of Public Works Juan S. Reyes, former Secretary of Agriculture Donald Flores and former Rep. Candido Taman.

Tudela said Taman would be running under the Covenant Party, which the mayor currently belongs to.

Tudela said he is ready to retire and concentrate on farming but, at the same time, he is also thinking of running for a higher position, "probably for Lt. Governor."

But Tudela said his children are not amenable to it.

"My family will help me decide on it. I hope to get their blessing first before I decide on it," he said.

The Mayor also mentioned about 11 possible candidates for the gubernatorial position but

Hyatt hosts over 200 Russian guests on NYE

Hyatt Regency Saipan said that over 200 Russian guests celebrated New Year's Eve at the Garapan landmark hotel.

"December 31 is always a big celebration day on the calendar. Year 2008 is more exciting for our hotel. This year we had over 200 Russian guests who stayed with us to celebrate this special day," said Hyatt in a statement issued yesterday.

Hyatt Regency Saipan annually throws an exclusive New Year's Eve poolside dinner party for its Russian guests. This tradition got started in 2007 and last year's was the second.

"We had over 130 guests who dressed up and attended the night's celebrations. With an excellent buffet-style dinner, all-you-can-drink alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, a live band, and raffle prizes, our Russian guests enjoyed the night until 11:30pm. After the dinner party, guests were escorted to lobby area to join other guests from different countries, including the other Russian in-house guests, for the countdown party and fireworks. The night didn't end there, some guests staying and celebrating until the early morning of Jan. 1, 2009.

About Global Hyatt Corporation

Global Hyatt Corporation is one if the world's premier hotel companies with properties in 45 countries. Headquarter in Chicago, the company's affiliates own, operate, manage and franchise Hyatt-branded hotels and resorts under *Park Hyatt*®, *Andaz*™, *Grand Hyatt*®, *Hyatt Regency*®, *Hyatt Resorts*™, *Hyatt*®, *Hyatt Place*® and *Hyatt Summerfield Suites*® brands.

Hyatt operates 368 hotels worldwide and currently has properties under development on five continents. Global Hyatt Corporation is also the owner of *Hyatt Vacation Ownership, Inc.*, and operator of *Hyatt Vacation Club*®.

From the U.S. and Canada, reservations for any Hyatt hotel worldwide may be obtained by calling 1-800-233-1234 or visiting www.hyatt.com. ***(PR)***

Hyatt Regency Saipan throws an exclusive New Year's Eve poolside dinner party for its Russian guests.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Fat Joy Slim band performs for guests during the New Year's Eve poolside dinner party.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Guests pose for the camera.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hyatt Regency Saipan said that over 200 Russian guests celebrated New Year's Eve at the Garapan landmark hotel.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The guests also took pictures during the night.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

JANUARY 7, 1999

CDA calls on gov't to protect garment industry

Commonwealth Development Authority Chairman Juan S. Tenorio calls upon the local government to come up with measures that will cushion the garment industry from the worsening global economic turmoil. He issued the statement amid proposals to increase anew garment factories' user fee in a veiled attempt to raise more revenues for the cash-strapped government. "They should not be hasty in making drastic changes. Increasing user fee for the garment industry will not be good at this time. They should just leave it alone and make sure that everybody is following the standard," Tenorio said.

Commerce retracts statement

The Department of Commerce yesterday retracted an earlier statement warning the public against buying the insurance policies of two companies based in the United States. In a press release, Commerce Secretary Frankie B. Villanueva said the American Fidelity Life Insurance Co. of Pensacola, Florida and Trans World Assurance Co., of San Mateo, California have been cleared of the pending cases filed before the two companies. Villanueva said the retraction was made after the U.S. Attorney General and the United States District Judge, Western District of Washington approved the settlement agreement on Dec. 7, 1998. The two firms were found not guilty of any wrongdoing, he added.

JANUARY 7, 2000

Teno asked to halt transfer of SBDC

Senate Floor Leader Pete P. Reyes yesterday urged Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio not to approve the transfer of local Small Business Development Center to the Commonwealth Development Authority while an investigation by FBI is underway on allegations of improprieties by its former director. He also vowed to pursue the case against Jack Peters, who used to head the SBDC administered by the Northern Marianas College, until the probe clears him of any violations of U.S. laws involving federal funds granted to the center.

DOF-House tiff over reimbursement may reach court

Differences with the administration on which expenditures made by lawmakers can be shouldered by the government may reach the court after the House of Representatives yesterday failed to pass a bill amending the "public purpose" law. In its final session before adjourning sine die, the 18-seat chamber failed to meet the required three-fourths votes to approve the measure passed by the Senate in its last session on Tuesday as only 13 members were present SB 11-161, offered by Senate Floor Leader Pete P. Reyes, would have accepted reimbursements of expenditures incurred by some members of the Legislature that have been questioned by the Department of Finance.

JANUARY 7, 2002

Saipan roads safer DPS: No alcohol related-fatality in 2001

Saipan's alcohol-related fatality was recorded zero in 2001, a historical first for the island in 15 years. The Department of Public Safety reported last week that traffic-related deaths in Saipan alone have declined from 1986 to 2001, closing at a total of 59 fatalities. But each year in the last 15 years, the police noted that alcohol-related fatalities covered a percentage of the traffic deaths, except in the year that just ended.

Korean Air returns on Saturday

The much-anticipated return of Korean Airlines will finally happen this Saturday, at 2am, with the arrival of the first flight that will herald the resumption of direct flight services between Seoul and the Commonwealth. Marianas Visitors Authority officials and local dignitaries will be on hand to welcome the return of Korean Airlines' Seoul-Saipan flight. "The Korea-CNMI daily route will be providing additional seating capacity of more than 2,000 seats per week," said Vicky I. Benavente, acting managing director of MVA. Benavente said it was a welcome sign of hope for the local tourism industry.

Pacific

Plans afoot to tap Fiji's huge mahogany forests

SUVA, Fiji (Fijilive/PIR)—Fiji's mahogany forest, among the largest in the world, is expected to begin yielding some real money this year.

And much of the benefits of the lucrative green gold will go to indigenous landowners as a result of a new arrangement being put in place.

The interim Government is in the process of finalizing the transfer of the ownership of the mahogany plantations to the indigenous landowners through the Fiji Mahogany Trust.

The scheme will involve the licensing of approved harvesters who, as criteria of getting a licence, must, among other things, value add in Fiji, pay a levy for reforestation, brand Fijian mahogany, and provide employment.

According to interim Public Enterprise Minister Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, applicants for licences will be given favourable consideration if they have indigenous land owner equity participation.

"We will soon be making some public announcements on the matter. Hopefully all the required legal changes will be in place by the second and third quarter of the year and then we can start making money."

Interim Prime Minister Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama had last November announced that the transfer of ownership should be in place by January 1 this year.

He said the initiative is to bring indigenous Fijians into the mainstream economy and address inequalities of the past.

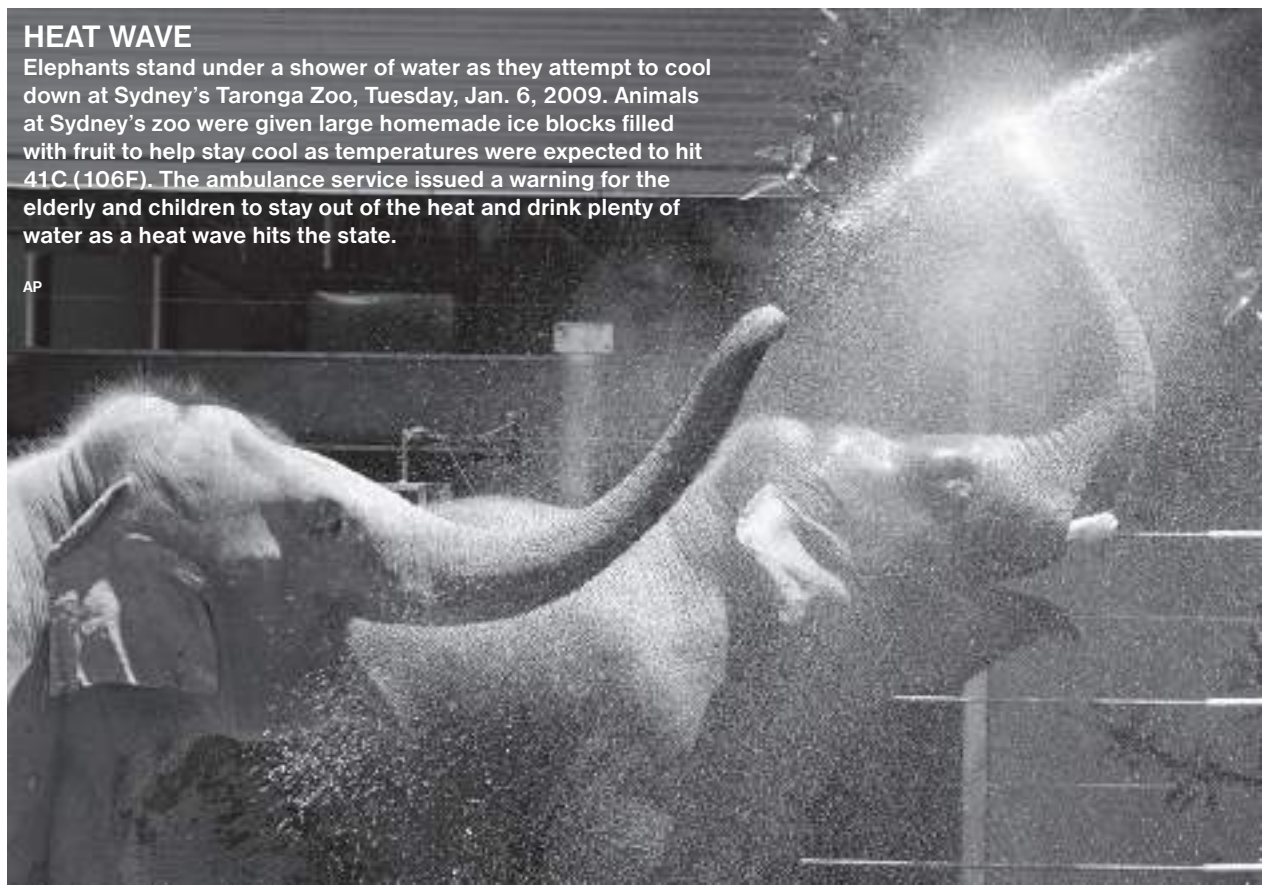
Sayed-Khaiyum explains that indigenous landowners will benefit from the proceeds of timber "whereas before they used to get 10 per cent, now they will get 90 per cent".

"It is about empowering landowners," he said.

Fiji Hardwood Corporation, which will be redirected to become a mahogany and forest manager, should also begin to make money, according to Sayed-Khaiyum.

"Fiji Hardwood Corporation has not made any profit since its inception in 1998 except for last year," he said.

Hardwood plantations managed by Fiji Hardwood Corporation comprise approximately 70,000 hectares of land spread across the two main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.



HEAT WAVE
Elephants stand under a shower of water as they attempt to cool down at Sydney's Taronga Zoo, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009. Animals at Sydney's zoo were given large homemade ice blocks filled with fruit to help stay cool as temperatures were expected to hit 41C (106F). The ambulance service issued a warning for the elderly and children to stay out of the heat and drink plenty of water as a heat wave hits the state.

AP

Trobriand isles report typhoid, malaria, tuberculosis

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National/PIR)—Kiriwina islanders in the Trobriand group of islands have succumbed to a simultaneous outbreak of deadly diseases like typhoid, yaws, malaria, pneumonia and tuberculosis that have claimed 38 lives so far.

A district health inspector, based at Losuia, claimed the outbreak of the diseases was concurrent and people could now infect others.

He said the water supply at the Losuia Government station and the nearby villages was obtained from bored wells which were contaminated.

He also said the villagers along the coastal stretch from Tukwaukwa all the way to Kavataria were prone to infection as they relied on stream water, which were occasionally polluted with human faces and domesticated animals.

Another health officer said some villagers were so strong in their cultural sentiments that the introduction and use of pit toilets would seem foreign to them as they enjoyed free use of the bushes for defecation.

"The hospital is lacking basic medical drugs and there are already so many people being infected.

"Thirty-eight people have been confirmed dead and we are still short of medicines and other vital drugs to contain the outbreak," he added.

He also said the general environment surrounding the villages needed to be improved and it required the political will to change people's mindset.

Provincial health authorities had dispatched a team of health technicians led by provincial disease controller Tirah Elliot to Losuia on the eve of Christmas to spend several weeks conducting intensive medical investigations and evaluations.

Mr. Elliot said the environment was conducive to outbreak of contagious diseases and the people needed to start changing their social and environmental habits to avoid contracting these infectious diseases.

Meanwhile, an officer from the national disaster office in Port Moresby has called on both the National and Milne Bay provincial governments to step in to prevent the outbreak of the disease on the islands.

American Samoa elections yield 11 new members

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—American Samoa has eleven new members in the Senate and the House of Representatives following a swearing-in ceremony.

Among the 11 newcomers is a new Senate President, Gaoteote Palaie Gaoteote, who will replace, Lolo Moliga.

"A historical event for the Senate itself, for the first time in many many years their are two woman Senators in the territorial Senate. These are a former Senator, Fonoti Aufata and newcomer Asuega Saamata. There are two new Senators in the Senate and their sons are sitting in the House of Representatives another historical event for this new legislature."

A Senate seat has been left empty because two candidates had chosen to represent the Manu'a district number two.

Lolo Moliga and Velega Savali have stepped aside until a decision for an appointment by the traditional leaders and orator of Manu'a district number two has been reached.

Solomons Central Bank reports $8.5 million surplus

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (Solomon Times/PIR)—The Central Bank of Solomon Islands has reported that the government has achieved a recurrent surplus of more than 59 million Solomon Islands dollars [US$8.5 million] in the third quarter of last year.

This is compared to the previous quarter's budget surplus of just under 23-million dollars [US$3.3 million].

The Central Bank says the positive outcome had been the strong recurrent revenue collection and lower recurrent expenditures.

The bank says a marginal increase in money supply by two percent to one-thousand-387 million dollars in response to a rise in the domestic credit to one-thousand-238 million dollars.

It says excess liquidity also increased to 87 million dollars.

The Central Bank says inflation remains high at about 24 percent at the end of the third quarter last year.

The bank says with the current inflationary pressures and pressures on the reserves, it will maintain its Monetary Policy, whilst continuously monitoring economic events in the global and domestic economy.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

Solomons government wants more students in PNG

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (Solomon Times/PIR)—Government plans to increase the number of its students doing studies in Papua New Guinea institutions from this year, with Unitech expected to again host the largest numbers. Solomon Islands High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea, Bernard Bata'anisia, said this during a day's visit to the Taraka campus recently. He said the Solomon Islands Government had placed education and manpower training as a key priority, and was looking to increase the number of students it provided with scholarships to study in PNG institutions. He said development of the agricultural sector was vital and as such, the Government was looking at sending students to the Vudal University in East New Britain for the first time from next year.

Man arrested at PNG airport with small arsenal

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National/PIR)—MT Hagen police confiscated a rocket launcher along with nine grenades, a sophisticated lens and two CDs from a man at Kagamuga Airport last Wednesday. A suspect from Nipa in Southern Highlands province was transporting the items on a flight from Kikori, Gulf province, into Western Highlands province, when police checked his luggage and confiscated the items The suspect was arrested. The rocket launcher was dismantled and neatly packed in a suitcase. The suspect is locked up at the Mt Hagen police cells awaiting formal charges. Provincial police commander Chief Supt Thomas Eluh said last Friday that police knew the weapon was a rocket launcher by looking at the illustration but they were yet to identify the type and what sort of damage it could cause when used. He said police suspected that the weapon was being smuggled for use in tribal fights in the province.

Fiji kava farmers seek government support

SUVA, Fiji (Fiji Sun/PIR)—Kava is the much-needed catalyst to boost the country's economy, says Fiji Kava Council chairman Ratu Josateki Nawalowalo. He said due to the ailing sugar industry, the only hope the country has now is in kava. The Kadavu chief yesterday said the future looks bright for the kava industry but to gain from the re-opening of the European market, could only be made possible through government support. Ratu Josateki said after consultations between the European Commission and several Pacific Island representatives, a decision had been reached last year to re-open the lucrative kava market. "An agreement was reached last year to re-open the market. But this was under the condition that we institutionalize ourselves locally to ensure that there would be a strong source market for kava.

Fiji panel seeks to mend relations with New Zealand

SUVA, Fiji (Fiji Times/PIR)—A three-member team, headed by interim Education Minister Filipe Bole, will work at mending bilateral relations between Fiji and New Zealand. Interim Attorney-General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum said interim Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama wrote to New Zealand Prime Minister John Key outlining a way forward. "The (interim) Prime Minister, in his letter to John Key, had set out a way forward for New Zealand and Fiji to engage in a constructive and meaningful manner," he said. "In this respect the (interim) Prime Minister also said that a three-member panel to be headed by the interim Minister of Education, Filipe Bole, who has been a foreign minister and deputy PM of Fiji, could expedite any outstanding issues and facilitate a diplomatic way forward by engaging with the New Zealand officials in Wellington.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Why the US lost manufacturing jobs, and how it can replace them

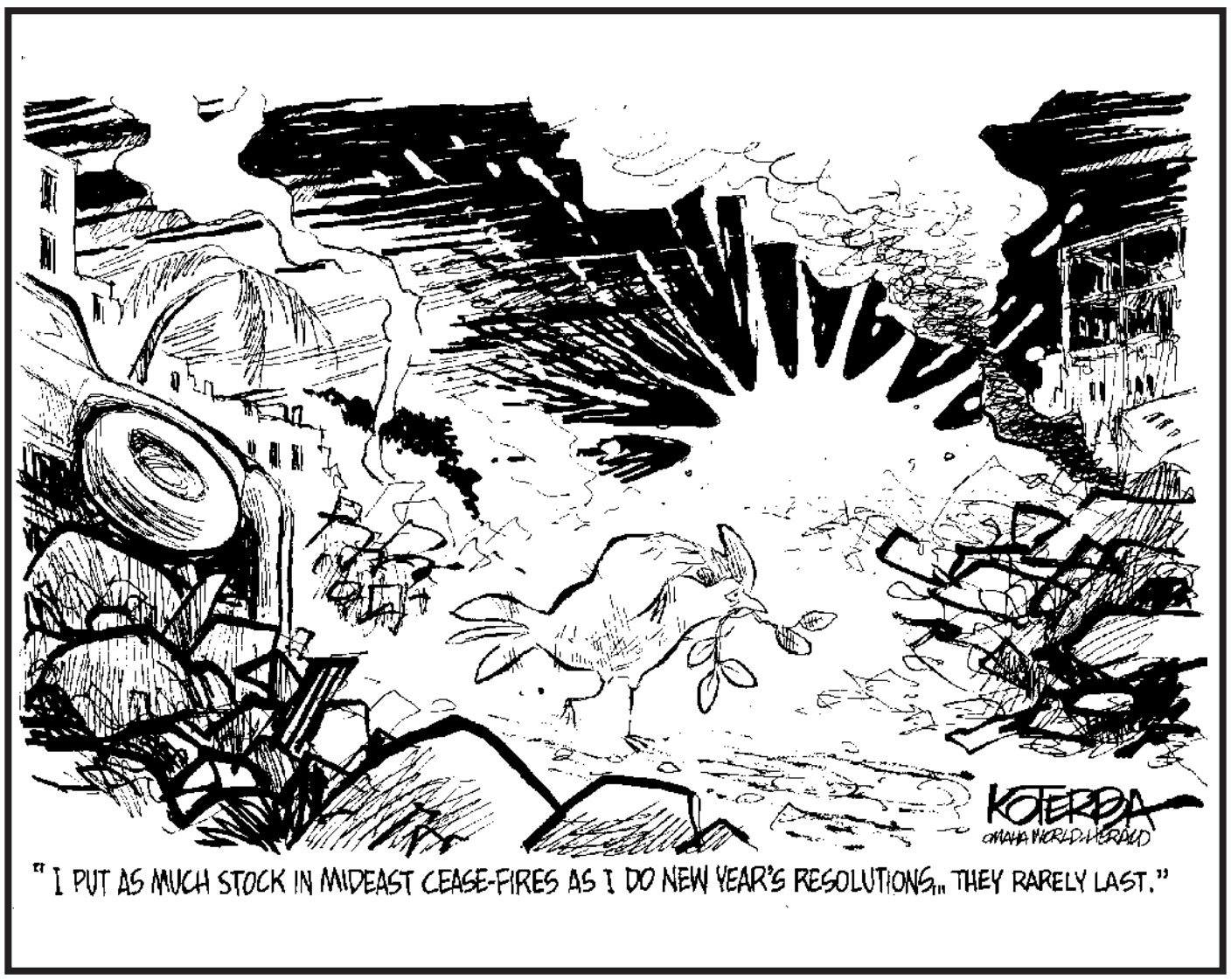
Many forces helped propel Barack Obama to victory in the presidential election in 2008: the financial crisis, an unpopular war in Iraq, dissatisfaction with President Bush—not to mention his own considerable merits. But when Americans told pollsters the country was on the wrong track, they were also expressing unease about its long-term economic and social strength—its capacity to sustain a broad middle class upon which community, country and democracy itself rest. And at the heart of that anxiety is the loss of the good-paying manufacturing jobs that, both in reality and in collective imagination, made America great. Hence Mr. Obama's promise of 5 million new "green" jobs that "pay well and can't be outsourced."

A new study from the Congressional Budget Office shows just how precipitous the recent decline in manufacturing work has been: 22 percent since the 2001 recession. Hit particularly hard were the textiles and apparel industries, which shed nearly 60 percent of their positions between 2000 and 2008; the motor vehicles sector lost more than 32 percent. The study will provide some ammunition for those inclined to blame free trade for American industry's plight: The CBO argues that much of the relative decline in U.S. manufacturing was due to imports. Indeed, though U.S. manufactured exports rose 58 percent between 1999 and 2007, that increase was swamped by a simultaneous rise of 78 percent in manufactured imports.

But, properly understood, these numbers actually offer support for free trade. As the CBO also shows, foreign competition had a double effect on American jobs: Imports replaced U.S. products, but they also forced remaining manufacturers to get more efficient. Thanks to rapidly rising productivity, these firms could generate more output with fewer workers, but at least they survived. Without the spur of global competition, U.S. companies could have continued producing at higher costs, depriving other, potentially more competitive segments of the economy of the resources they needed to expand. Overall, trade helped the country grow richer—with much of the gain accruing to consumers in the form of lower prices and greater quality.

The CBO's data show that, while the loss of manufacturing jobs in the first decade of the 21st century was especially sharp and sustained, it is hardly a brand-new phenomenon. In fact, the United States has been gradually going out of the manufacturing business for nearly half a century. As a share of total employment, manufacturing work declined from about 19.5 percent in 1958 to 10 percent now. This country emerged from World War II as a kind of planetary workshop, supplying cars, steel, chemicals and just about everything else for a world that was mostly poor and politically weak. That artificial dominance was bound to fade; today, our economy still leads the world, but billions of working-age men and women, from China to Peru, stand ready and able to produce things that once came only from Detroit or Pittsburgh. Millions of them have been lifted out of poverty as a result. The challenge for the United States now is to find new engines of growth, profits and jobs—whether in manufacturing or some other sector. We hope that the Obama administration helps U.S. firms adapt. But we hope it also understands that no one can abolish economic reality—and that it would be futile to try.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post



PREDICTIONS FOR FUN & PROFIT UPDATE

Plus: How to choose your life's philosophy

The only way to take control of your life, raise your standard of living and move beyond merely surviving is to create your own unique product or service that you offer to increasing numbers of people in exchange for the things of value that you desire. This simple formula applies to countries as well as people. A self-sufficient economy has its own products or services of value to export to the world. Similarly, a self-sufficient individual has something of value to exchange in the global marketplace. That thing of value is based on your natural talent, skill, or interest—in other words, your passion!

PART I: Prediction Update:

The business of making predictions requires a slightly uncomfortable amount of self-aggrandizement. Once you make a prediction say, in a newspaper, it then becomes your job to remind people what your predictions were, how many came true, and to reinforce your own accuracy rate. Few people will actually keep track on their own, and write you to say you were wrong, and fewer still will write you to say you were right! You have to do your own promotion, because, quite frankly, no one cares...unless you start predicting natural disasters, deaths and lottery numbers!

Now, you may argue that some of these "predictions" were simply obvious inevitabilities that didn't require psychic or prescient abilities to foretell, but since I'm doing the calculations, here, I've got my accuracy rate at 100%!

With that said, *ahem*, and as a self-serving reminder, let it be noted that on October 15, 2008, "we" (that would be the royal "we") predicted:

1. Barack Obama would be president, 34 days before the election took place;

2. The auto industry would continue its decline, two months before the bailout;

3. The last garment factory would close, 93 days before Uno Moda's now official scheduled closure on Jan. 15 [*[*one other factory remains in a state of suspension until further notice], and in breaking news,*

4. The Mariana Monument would be signed into existence, 84 days before today.

That's right, it's official. According to our on-the-scene roving reporter, Angelo Villagomez*: "the MARIANAS MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT is going to be 95,000 square miles. It includes the waters around the three northern islands in the original proposal, the entire trench, and 21 different seamounts, some off the coast of Saipan and Rota."*

If I'm correct, that makes it the second or third largest of its kind.

THE SAIPANPRENEUR PROJECT

Creating economic success for the CNMI

By WALT F.J. GOODRIDGE
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Send article suggestions, entrepreneur nominations and feedback about this article to walt@passionprofit.com.

And, for those who successfully lobbied on behalf of the Monument, congratulations. It's now time to take...

The next leap of faith

The goal is one step closer
Well done! but don't stop there
The moment that you took it
it became a conquered fear

The field has now been altered
the rules have now been changed
The dreams you set your sights upon
are now within your range

You're now a different person
new dreams new comfort zone
You're likely to regress
without some brand new skills to hone

So revel in your victory
But please don't rest too long
Without new heights to soar to
pampered wings grow weak not strong

There is no end to striving
For that's the game we play
And men need dreams to test their skills
like dragons knights need slay

PART II: How I Choose My Philosophy of Life

As you set your goals for the next new challenge, or plan your life for the new year, I'd like to share a little excerpt from a short story about a man who is challenged about how he lives his life. The

See PLUS on Page 11

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The pride of the Pacific

By STEPHEN B. SMITH
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Steve B. Smith is the Accreditation, Language Arts, and National Forensic League coordinator for the Public School System Central Office.

In recent times a number of articles have appeared in these and other pages critiquing the efforts and effectiveness of the CNMI's Public School System in its tasks and goals. I am today in counterpoint to some of these articles. Quite frankly, our people, our community is more than justified in taking pride in the accomplishments that PSS to date has achieved.

Some years ago, the federal government instituted its *No Child Left Behind Act*. Rather than bemoaning the heavy responsibilities the Act placed upon the district and more especially with its ties to federal funding, PSS embraced the Act and immediately began implementation of its mandates. Stringent benchmarks that would demonstrate marked student achievement and measures taken to ensure the quality of the teaching corps were among such mandates.

PSS in its response has undeniably set the bar high. The rigorous curriculum which the district's schools are now tasked with teaching our young people is challenging. In order to facilitate such a rigorous curriculum, PSS has, among other things, instituted an equally rigorous system of guaranteeing the quality and professionalism of its teaching corps, e.g., the nationally recognized PRAXIS series tests (subject area content knowledge), specific course work related to the teaching field per se, and degrees from recognized and accredited colleges and universities.

Rigorous courses, professional accountability, what's left? Answer: the reason why those two things are important—they impact our young people's future big time! That said, there remains the eternal challenge: how to get the students, our young people, to care. The best curriculum in the world—and ours is good—means nothing. The greatest teaching core that can be employed means nothing. They mean nothing, that is, unless students are motivated to learn!

PSS is all out to motivate our students to want to be in the classroom. Academic programs to tailor the coursework to the students' exact needs and extracurricular activities set to appeal to a broad spectrum of our student population are examples of this.

Example of the academic side: language acquisition standards to ensure the best possible comprehension of the material that the teachers present. A word about this last. It is possibly not clearly understood by all, that this jurisdiction is unique: virtually everyone in it speaks two languages and 25 percent of our students speak a language other than English in the home; these are real numbers. Yet PSS does not use this as a basis to water down the coursework. Regardless of the challenges we as residents of the CNMI face, our students, our youth, will one day be asked to compete with myriad others in today's global marketplace, and they must be ready.

Examples of extracurricular activities: Speech and debate competitions, Math and Science and Social Science fairs and contests, band and sports and art exhibits; the list is long.

The community is helping. The Humanities Council, Friends of the Arts, the Chamber of Commerce, private companies, individual folk from the political and social arenas: we are a community. We must all hang together; the alternative is not an option.

Among American political jurisdictions, the CNMI receives among the lowest per student dollar support. This last the result of flagging economies both here and in the States. Still, while we all hope for improved levels of support, even adequate levels of support; PSS, in my view, is making strenuous efforts to utilize the funding that is available to maximize student success.

In the final analysis, we in the CNMI are more than justified in taking pride in the achievements of our education leaders and our teaching corps. They are definitely walking the walk.

Letter to the Editor

Freeing the NMI from the two-tiered system

The free market economy of the United States (and the CNMI) relies on labor and business to drive it. Anyone in theory is free to start a company and see if it makes money for them. You might have an idea and believe others will buy your product or services, and that price they pay will be more than the product or services' overall costs. Now of course the idea of a business is to make as much money as possible. If someone was giving away money, would you take it?

As a business owner you want to keep costs down and revenue up. Part of the cost of running a business is labor costs. If you could get five workers to work for a dollar an hour or one worker to work for $5 an hour, you would chose to have the five workers—unless the one could produce more than the five. It's in a business owner's interest to have very low labor costs. Now, as a worker, would you still take the money if someone is giving it away? If you have a job offer that pays $5 an hour and one that offers $1 an hour, which would you chose? You would take the $5 an hour unless the work is very hard or dangerous. Here is the key to the situation on Saipan: Business owners want cheap labor, and they have it. Why would they give it up? They will not. Everything is subject to the laws of supply and demand—if there is a lot of demand, then the price of an item goes up; if the supply is low and the demand is high, the price goes way up. If the supply is great, then the price goes down. If the supply is great and the demand is low then the price goes way down.

Saipan's labor is limited by the amount of foreign workers, which is for all practical purposes unlimited. This means the wages of laborers is going to be low. This only benefits the business owners, not the laborers. It's not all good, because low wages means the workers have less money to spend on goods and services. Japan has high labor costs compared to Saipan, but that means the workers have money to spend and that is good. Saipan will never improve its economy in the long run with low labor wages. It creates a two-tiered system that we see now—the owners and the workers.

U.S. citizens that get a job with the government sit a bit outside this system as the government is not subject to the laws in the short run. In the long run, government cannot be the solution to this problem. The solution is to balance the amount of labor with the amount of business. Removing the cheap labor and stopping the reliance on the government to provide a living for U.S. citizens is the only long-term solution that will work. Why would a young man on Saipan learn a trade as a mechanic, carpenter, boat captain or fisherman when the wages of those trades is well below what it takes to raise a family on the island? You'd have to be raised in and used to Third World conditions to realistically want a job like that—and that is why cheap labor is available. As letter writers in the past have shown, understanding this can be outside their grasp. However, understanding this is key to improving the lives of both the workers and owners.

The CNMI will do just fine without the cheap labor in the long run. Will it take some time to wean the business owners from this? Yes. Will business owners and the politicians that depend on them try to stop this? Yes. Will it cause some pain in the transition? Yes. Will it remove the two-tiered system that creates so many issues? Yes. Will is allow young citizens of the CNMI to thrive and build a life on the islands? Yes. Will the guest workers dislike this? Yes. Will it help the natives retain control of their homeland, culture and language? Yes. Will it be easy? No. It must be done or the future of the islands will continue its downward spiral.

William McCue
Wellington, Florida

PLUS

From Page 10

following is a brief excerpt of a public speech in explanation of his life's choices.

'I don't necessarily agree...'

"Ladies and gentlemen. So that you will all understand me and my choices, let me tell you a story.

A few years ago, I met a young lady who became my girlfriend. She would visit my house on occasion and, at the time, as I was living in a tropical island, there would be the occasional fly, mosquito, lizard, and ant roaming through my apartment.

On the first of many such occasions, my girlfriend, upon seeing the ants in my apartment, started to make moves to kill them. She asked me if I had some spray. I told her no. I also asked her not to kill them. Just let them be, I asked. She thought I was crazy. When I have flies in my apartment, I open the door and guide them to it and let them out. I catch the annoying lizards and toss them out into the front yard. The reason I don't kill those living things, my friends, even though it's not against the law, and presumably no court would fault me for killing ants, is because I've decided that it's inconsistent with my philosophy of life. Regardless of what is "allowed" by society, I make my own decisions as to what my philosophy will be.

The reason I don' kill people, my friends, is not because it's against the law. It's because it's inconsistent with my chosen philosophy.

As a free human being, I reserve the right to choose my philosophy and act according to it.

Now, I'm not naive, nor am I a rebel for rebelliousness' sake. I understand that societies survive when people agree to adhere to certain codes—certain moral codes. And, for the record, for those who might not know, a moral code is any behavior that the society deems is necessary for its overall survival.

And I also understand that, ostensibly, laws are put in place to safeguard the rights, safety and survival of others. So, while I might like to drive 90 miles an hour, I also choose not to, because it puts me and others at risk, and it's a law that makes sense. So I follow the law because it makes sense to do so, not because police officers will give me a ticket.

So, having said all that, my friends, I befriend whom I wish because I choose to do so. I give to whom I wish because I have the unalienable right to do so. I live the lifestyle I do because I can. I share my lifestyle and knowledge with those who request. I make no apologies, I ask no permission, and I have no guilt or remorse for having done so.

My actions are not dictated by a fear of the consequences of externally imposed philosophies and laws. I do what makes sense given my ideals and worldview. I do what aids the survival of the whole according to how I see things. I do what makes me happy without infringing on the rights and freedoms of others. So, I may not always do what the masses do.

At the same time, I drive on the right side of the road, just like the masses do, because I recognize it's silly and unsafe not to. However, I don't eat meat, despite what the masses do, because I recognize it's silly and unsafe to do so. My actions are not dictated by a fear of the consequences of externally imposed philosophies, nor the judgment of other men. I choose my philosophy, according to how I see the world, and I live by it.

The philosophy I live by, therefore, is a simple one. I've decided that my beliefs and actions will be guided by the following ideals:

I do what is consistent with natural law as much as is practical.

I honor the law of cause and effect.

I strive to honor the rights and freedoms of others in all that I do.

I assist others whenever and wherever possible as long as their own ideals are consistent with the above and do not require that I compromise my own.

Some people choose what is accepted. Some people choose what is easy. Some people choose what is expedient. Some people choose what is profitable. Some people choose what they can get away with. Some people choose only what is within another's prescribed lines of behavior. I choose what suits me, because, my friends, I don't necessarily agree….

To be continued.

***Note**: For more tips on overcoming your fears, acting on your ideas, changing the game, and creating a passion-centered lifestyle, visit www.passionprofit.com!*

■ ■ ■

Until next week, remember, success is a journey, not a destination!

Walt F.J. Goodridge is author of 12 books including Turn Your Passion Into Profit*. Walt offers coaching and workshops to help people pursue and profit from their passions. Originally from the island of Jamaica, Walt has grown several successful businesses in the US, and now makes his home here in Saipan. To learn more about the Saipanpreneur Project and Walt's philosophy and formula visit www.saipanpreneur.com and www.passionprofit.com*

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

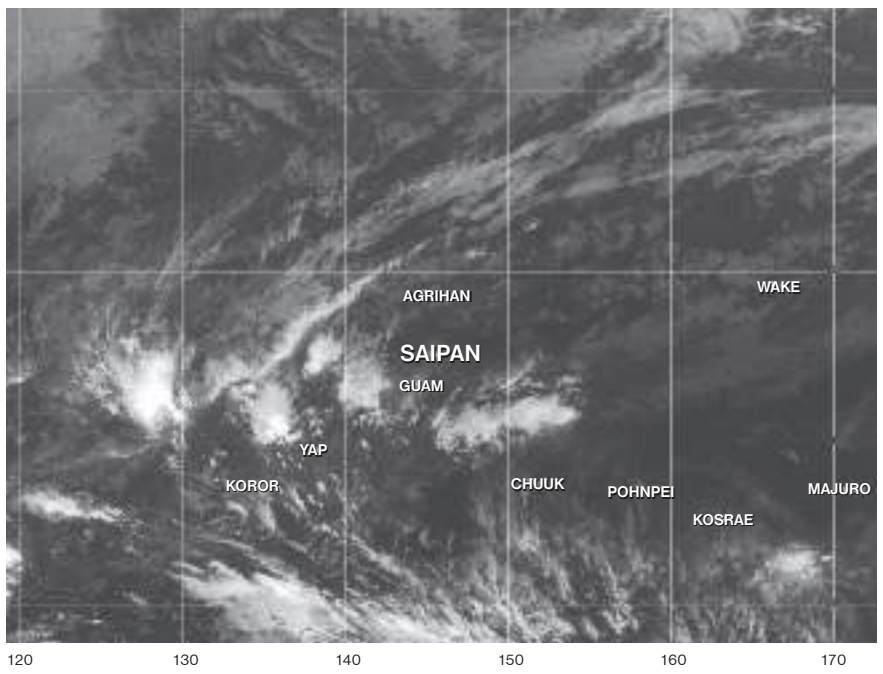
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	▲83	▼76
Palau	Showers	▲89	▼77
Yap	Sunny	▲88	▼76
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲89	▼81
Pohnpei	Partly Sunny	▲87	▼74
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼75
Majuro	Showers	▲84	▼78

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲78	▼65
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲32	▼14
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲70	▼57
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲79	▼68
London	Cloudy	▲37	▼28
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲70	▼50
Manila	Showers	▲86	▼70
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲83	▼51
Miami	Thundershowers	▲82	▼58
New York	Rain	▲42	▼34
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲46	▼35
Paris	Cold	▲26	▼23
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲45	▼24
Rome	Showers	▲49	▼42
Salem	Rain	▲50	▼44
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲57	▼47
Seoul	Sunny	▲34	▼14
Tokyo	Flurries	▲46	▼31
Washington, DC	Rain	▲49	▼34

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, JAN. 6, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line stretches across Micronesia from 20N180 to 10N150E to 11N130E. Low clouds and scattered showers can be found along and up to 175 miles north of the boundary. Isolated thunderstorms were located near the boundary between 145E and 155E and between 135E to 141E. A near-equatorial trough stretches from 6N130E to EQ148E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the trough are located between the equator and 2N from 131E to 140E. A low-level trough is located east of Majuro and stretches from the EQ170E to 10N180. Low-clouds and scattered showers associated with the trough can be found within 150 miles east and west of the trough. Low-level convergence ahead of the trough is generating scattered showers between 1N and 4N from 161E to 170E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
5:04AM Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
9:23AM Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
3:00PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
10:49PM Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:45AM	6:01 PM
Thursday	6:45AM	6:02 PM
Friday	6:46AM	6:03 PM
Saturday	6:46AM	6:03 PM
Sunday	6:46AM	6:04 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	1:53PM	2:16 AM
Thursday	2:51PM	3:20 AM
Friday	3:55PM	4:27 AM
Saturday	5:04PM	5:34 AM
Sunday	6:13PM	6:36 AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
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- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

US auto sales plunge whopping 36 percent in Dec.

DETROIT (AP)—Huge rebates and zero-percent loans couldn't overcome economic uncertainty as U.S. auto sales plunged 36 percent in December, capping a dismal year that saw sales free-fall by 2.9 million vehicles from 2007.

The bleak numbers, according to both industry officials and analysts, mean that record high rebates and low-interest financing deals will stick around until at least February. But those deals will likely disappear as the remaining 2008 models are sold and inventories are lowered to match demand.

One automaker, Hyundai Motor America, is trying to woo skittish buyers by promising to let them return cars for up to a year if they lose their jobs and can't make the payments.

Similar bold moves might be necessary throughout the year.

Every major manufacturer reported drops of more than 30 percent in December. Leading the largest year-over-year drop since the Arab oil embargo days of 1973-74 was struggling Chrysler LLC, which sold 53 percent fewer vehicles than last December and 30 percent fewer in 2008 than in 2007.

General Motors Corp. sold 2.9 million vehicles last year, the lowest number in 49 years.

U.S. auto sales tumbled to 13.2 million in 2008, down 18 percent from 16.1 million in 2007. Consulting firm IHS Global Insight predicts that U.S. sales will drop to 10.3 million this year as the economy continues to sputter.

Automakers were reluctant to predict when a recovery might occur, but most were pessimistic about the first quarter. After that, some were hopeful that President-elect Barack Obama's stimulus package would kick in, coupled with a loosening of credit that could bring people back to the showrooms.

AP

New cars are seen lined up at a dealership in Peabody, Mass. Monday, Jan. 5, 2009. Huge rebates and zero-percent loans couldn't trump economic uncertainty and the specter of bankruptcy as U.S. auto sales plunged 35 percent in December, capping a dismal 2008 that saw sales free-fall by more than 3 million vehicles from 2007.

Obama says his plan with tax cuts to get quick OK

WASHINGTON (AP)—President-elect Barack Obama plunged into rare pre-inaugural crisis talks with congressional leaders Monday, declaring the national economy was "bad and getting worse" and embracing tax cuts now expected to reach $300 billion. He predicted lawmakers would approve a mammoth revitalization package within two weeks of his taking office.

If the two-year plan is enacted, workers would see larger paychecks almost immediately because taxes withheld by the government would drop. The break would be retroactive to Jan. 1, and couples receiving a $1,000 tax cut would begin receiving an extra $40 in twice-monthly paychecks as the government tries to spark more consumer spending.

"The economy is very sick," said Obama, who met privately with leaders of both parties at the Capitol. "The situation is getting worse. ... We have to act and act now to break the momentum of this recession."

Obama, who takes office two weeks from Tuesday, has said there can be only one president at a time—and he repeated that principle Monday "when it comes to foreign affairs." But when it comes to the floundering economy, he clearly feels he cannot sit by until the swearing-in.

"The reason we are here today is because the people's business cannot wait," Obama said as he arrived on Capitol Hill.

"I expect to be able to sign a bill shortly after taking office," he said. Pressed on the timing, he said, "By the end of January or the first of February."

Obama's proposal to stimulate the economy includes tax cuts of up to $300 billion—including $500 for most individuals and $1,000 for couples if one spouse is employed—as well as more than $100 billion for businesses, an Obama transition official said. The total value of the tax cuts would be significantly higher than had been signaled earlier.

Investors collect profits after last week's rally

NEW YORK (AP)—Caution returned to Wall Street Monday as investors gave back some gains from last week's rally even as they found encouragement from President-elect Barack Obama's calls for an economic stimulus package.

Some retreat was to be expected after investors sent the Dow Jones industrial average to a two-month high on Friday; investors are wary about pouring more money into the battered market with economic data still weak and fourth-quarter earnings reports coming later this month.

Monday was expected to be the first real test of Wall Street in 2009 after many traders were on vacation on Friday, leading to light volume that may have exaggerated the market's move upward. Investors are still contending with fears about everything from the state of corporate earnings to consumers' willingness to spend during a recession.

Prices fluctuated throughout the session, but some analysts found signs that the market's improving tone from December was carrying over to the new year.

"There is some optimism out there that there is going to be a massive stimulus package by Obama that is going to get passed and that will help the economy," said Greg Church, chief investment officer of Church Capital Management.

Church warned, however, that a recovery will be difficult.

"The economy is still very weak. Unemployment is still high and is likely to get worse," he said But some analysts cautioned against drawing big conclusions from Monday's trading.

"We're not reading too much into this market right now, especially after Friday's big gain," said Matt King, chief investment officer at Bell Investment Advisors. "There's just not a lot of conviction behind it."

Prosecutor wants Madoff jailed without bail

NEW YORK (AP)—A prosecutor on Monday asked that Bernard Madoff be jailed pending trial, saying the disgraced financier violated an agreement with the court by mailing watches, jewelry, cufflinks and mittens worth more than $1 million to relatives and friends.

"The defendant's recent actions amount to obstruction of justice," Assistant U.S. Attorney Marc Litt told U.S. Magistrate Judge Ronald Ellis at an hour-long bail hearing. The prosecutor said one package of items that was accompanied by a handwritten note from Madoff may alone be worth more than $1 million.

The judge ordered both sides to submit written arguments this week and said he would rule later.

Madoff's lawyer, Ira Sorkin, said his client did not violate a court-imposed asset freeze by mailing heirlooms including $25 cufflinks, pens and a $200 pair of mittens through the post office to his brother, a son and daughter-in-law and a New York couple vacationing in Florida.

Sorkin called it an innocent mistake and said Madoff and his wife sought the return of the items they had sent on Dec. 24 as soon as they were told they could not send them out. He also suggested that some of the items mailed belonged to Madoff's wife, and therefore were not subject to a court order at that time.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Apple's Jobs has hormone imbalance, will stay CEO

NEW YORK (AP)—Apple Inc. founder Steve Jobs, a survivor of pancreatic cancer whose gaunt appearance in the past year has alarmed the Mac and iPod lovers who look to him as an oracle, said Monday he has an easily treated hormone imbalance and will remain in charge of the company. The news sent Apple stock up more than 4 percent on a down day for much of the market. But Jobs did not say whether the problem was related to the cancer, and some analysts said the health watch may not be over. The CEO's health is an important issue for any company, but especially for Apple, where Jobs has presided over a decade of huge success. His mix of secrecy and high-design principles, seen in the rollouts of new Mac computers, the iPod music player and the iPhone, has become a trademark. In a public letter, Jobs, 53, said his thinness had been a mystery even to him and his doctors until a few weeks ago, when "sophisticated blood tests" confirmed that he has "a hormone imbalance that has been `robbing' me of the proteins my body needs to be healthy."

Oil settles above $48 on uneasy Mideast

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP)—Israel's ground offensive in Gaza and a dispute between Ukraine and Russia over gas imports pushed oil prices above $48 a barrel Monday, but some analysts say there's more than just unrest in the Middle East behind the rally. Light, sweet crude for February delivery rose $2.47 cents to settle at $48.81 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Israel seized control of high-rise buildings and attacked houses, mosques and smuggling tunnels as it pressed its offensive against the Gaza Strip's Hamas rulers, while the U.S. joined a number of countries calling for a cease-fire. Energy consultancy Cameron Hanover said some traders like to point to violence in the Middle East as a cause of higher oil prices, but the reality is slightly different. "Any time that prices react by moving higher, in response to violence in the Middle East, particularly in non-oil producing countries like Israel or the Palestinian territories next door, it is a good sign that the market wants to move higher," the firm said in its Daily Energy Hedger report.

STOCK Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA 3,689.200 Up 50.300 (1.38%)

HONG KONG 15,387.41 Down 175.90 (-1.13 %)

JAKARTA 1,436.4659 Down 0.8721 (-0.06%)

TOKYO 9,082.62 Up 39.50 (0.44%)

K. LUMPUR 917.40 Down 3.26 (-0.35%)

MANILA 1,969.58 Down 5.11 (-0.26%)

SINGAPORE 1,905.33 Down 19.54 (-1.02%)

SEOUL 1,186.03 Up 12.46 (1.06%)

BANGKOK 479.11 Up 0.42 (0.09%)

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW 8,952.89 -81.80

NASDAQ 1,628.03 -4.18

S&P 927.45 -4.35

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.4057
British Pound	0.6843
Canadian Dollar	1.1945
Chinese Renminbi	6.8377
Euro	0.7382
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7541
Indian Rupee	48.695
Indonesian Rupiah	11,140.0000
Japanese Yen	93.0500
Malaysian Ringgit	3.5043
New Zealand Dollar	1.7101
Philippine Peso	46.9400
Singapore Dollar	1.4732
South Korean Won	1,310.0000
Swiss Franc	1.1123
Taiwan Dollar	33.0370
Thailand Baht	35.0370

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

Boy, 4, shoots babysitter for stepping on his foot

JACKSON, Ohio (AP)—Police say an angry 4-year-old Ohio boy grabbed a gun from a closet and shot his baby sitter. Nathan Beavers, 18, was hospitalized Sunday with minor wounds to his arm and side after the shotgun attack. Police say another teen was also injured. Witnesses told police the child was angry because Beavers accidentally stepped on his foot. Beavers was watching the child at a mobile home in Jackson with several other teenagers and several other children. Jackson County Sheriff John Shashteen says authorities are investigating. The child has not been charged.

Search begins for Kansas boy missing 10 years

EL DORADO, Kan. (AP)—A missing Kansas boy's adoptive parents, who failed to report his disappearance for nearly a decade, are considered "people of interest" in the case as authorities expand their search nationwide, a sheriff said Monday. Investigators were focused on finding Adam Herrman, who was 11 when he disappeared in 1999 from a mobile home park in Towanda where he lived, Butler County Sheriff Craig Murphy said. Authorities only recently learned he was missing, and would not say whether they believed he was still alive. "We are working it as if it is a death—but we are not leaning one way or the other," Murphy said. His parents, Doug and Valerie Herrman, have not been arrested or charged. Asked why, Murphy replied: "We are not ready is an honest and upfront answer."

5 homeless shelter residents killed in Texas fire

PARIS, Texas (AP)—A fire fueled by donated clothes ripped through a homeless shelter in northeastern Texas early Monday, killing five residents as some tried dousing the blaze with pans of water. Paris Fire Chief Ronnie Grooms said the cause of the fire in the converted bakery remained unknown, but investigators said a roughly 25-foot-long table piled with donated clothes was a possible starting point. Arson is not suspected, he said. The fire started just before 3 a.m. and sent more than 20 residents scrambling outside into cold rain. Some escaped barefoot, and others had no time to grab clothes or coats. "It went fast," said Roger Riemer, 49, who had lived at the shelter since September. "There was quite a few people trying to get it out, but it didn't work. It was just getting too hot. Smoke was billowing out of there so bad. There was nothing we could do." The names of the victims, some of them left almost unidentifiable, were not immediately released. Their bodies were sent to Dallas for autopsies and positive identification, said Ernie Sparks, Lamar County justice of the peace.

Records reveal anguish of anthrax suspect's wife

FREDERICK, Md. (AP)—Anthrax mailing suspect Bruce Ivins tormented his wife with rudeness and behaved erratically in the weeks before the Army scientist took his own life by overdosing on Tylenol, according to documents released Monday.

The Frederick Police Department records also reveal that Ivins acknowledged to a nurse the overdose was intentional. The documents, first obtained by The Frederick News-Post, include details of an earlier overdose of drugs and alcohol that an investigator called a suicide attempt, but which Diane Ivins insisted was accidental.

Ivins, who worked in a Fort Detrick biological defense laboratory, died at Frederick Memorial Hospital July 29 as federal authorities were preparing to charge him with mailing the anthrax-filled letters that that killed five people and sickened 17 others in 2001.

Ivins' lawyer, Paul Kemp, maintains that Ivins was innocent and would have been cleared had the case gone to trial.

Messages left seeking comment from Kemp and Diane Ivins weren't immediately returned Monday.

AP

In this 2003 file photo, Bruce E. Ivins, a biodefense researcher is seen at Fort Detrick, Md. Ivins, an anthrax mailing suspect, tormented his wife with rudeness and behaved erratically in the weeks before the Army scientist took his own life by overdosing on Tylenol, according to documents released Monday, Jan. 5, 2009.

The police records include a letter Diane Ivins wrote to her husband July 24, the day he returned from a two-week stay in a psychiatric hospital.

"I'm hurt, concerned, confused and angry about your actions over the last few weeks," she wrote. "You tell me you love me but you have been rude and sarcastic and nasty many times when you talk to me."

She scolded him for filling out a gun license application, ignoring his lawyer's advice, taking late-night walks and working odd hours. She questioned whether he was following medical advice for stress reduction.

On an audio recording that was also released, Diane Ivins told an investigator there was a missing second page of her letter, in which she told her husband, "I knew he was innocent of the anthrax letters and I never doubted him for a second."

Ivins apparently responded to the letter by writing on the back of the sheet: "I have a terrible headache. I'm going to take some Tylenol and sleep in tomorrow."

Diane Ivins told police that her husband also had severe headaches July 25 and 26. At about 1 a.m. July 27, she said she awoke and found him unresponsive on the floor of an upstairs bathroom in their house near Fort Detrick. She called 911, and he was taken to the hospital, where he died two days later.

On the day he was admitted, Ivins awoke and was able to nod his head in response to questions posed by a nurse, according to medical records included in the police documents. "When asked, 'Did you intentionally try to commit suicide?' patient nodded yes," the document states.

Four months earlier, on March 19, police had been called to Ivins' home by his wife, who told the responding officer her husband had taken too much Valium or sleeping pills with alcohol. "I asked Ms. Ivins if she believed her husband was attempting to commit suicide and she stated, 'no,'" Officer Ryan Forrest wrote in his report.

Ivins was taken to the hospital emergency room but was not admitted.

Obama's intel picks short on direct experience

WASHINGTON (AP)—President-elect Barack Obama's decision to fill the nation's top intelligence jobs with two men short on direct experience in intelligence gathering surprised the spy community and signaled the Democrat's intention for a clean break from Bush administration policies.

Former Clinton White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, an eight-term congressional veteran and administrative expert, is being tapped to head the CIA. Retired Adm. Dennis Blair is Obama's choice to be director of national intelligence, a selection expected for weeks, according to two Democrats who spoke on condition of anonymity because Obama has not officially announced the choices.

The Obama transition team's long delay in selecting CIA and national intelligence directors is a reflection of the complicated demands of the jobs and Obama's own policies and priorities.

Obama is sending an unequivocal message that controversial administration policies approving harsh interrogations, waterboarding and extraordinary renditions—the secret transfer of prisoners to other governments with a history of torture—and warrantless wiretapping are over, said several officials.

The search for Obama's new CIA chief had been stalled since November, when John Brennan, Obama's transition intelligence adviser, abruptly withdrew his name from consideration. Brennan said his potential nomination had sparked outrage among civil rights and human rights groups, who argued that he had not been outspoken enough in his condemnation of President George W. Bush's policies.

And despite an internal list of former and current CIA officials who had impressive administrative credentials, all either worked in intelligence during the Bush administration's development of controversial policies on interrogation and torture or earlier, during the months leading up to the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

Burris says he's senator—but Dems won't seat him

WASHINGTON (AP)—Senate Democrats struggled to avert a showdown steeped in race and corruption Monday as a defiant Roland Burris declared, "I'm a United States senator" and flew to the capital to claim President-elect Barack Obama's old seat in Congress.

Even as he sought to pressure fellow Democrats, Burris signaled there were limits to his rebelliousness. "I'm not going to make a scene. I don't want to give you all a circus," he told reporters asking whether he intended to breach protocol by attempting to walk uninvited onto the Senate floor on Tuesday.

The 71-year-old veteran of Illinois politics was still en route from his home state when Majority Leader Harry Reid announced he would not be permitted to take his seat when other new lawmakers are sworn into office. Burris "has not been certified by the state of Illinois" Reid said, a reference to incomplete paperwork that barely begins to describe the dispute.

While Burris has not been accused of any wrongdoing, he was named to the Senate last week by Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who faces charges of having attempted to sell the seat.

Senate officials said it was possible Reid would try and have Burris' case referred to the Rules Committee for review, a move that would effectively sidetrack the issue while the complicated political and legal situation in Illinois could be sorted out. They spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they were not authorized to discuss possible developments.

Reid, D-Nev., had appeared to leave open the possibility of a compromise over the weekend after failing to persuade Blagojevich to leave the seat vacant. Burris is to meet privately on Wednesday with the majority leader in his office a few paces off the Senate floor.

Burris, who is black, downplayed the issue of race at a news conference before boarding a flight from Chicago to Washington—even though supporters have given it prominence.

"I cannot control my supporters. I have never in my life, in all my years of being elected to office, thought anything about race," he said.

AP

Illinois U.S. Senate appointee Roland Burris arrives at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport in Linthicum, Md., Monday, Jan. 4, 2009.

Kennedy missteps might not trip her up in the end

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—Caroline Kennedy's missteps and halting speech patterns have been replayed endlessly since she announced her bid to succeed Hillary Rodham Clinton in the U.S. Senate.

News articles nationwide, editorials and endless political blogs called her not ready for prime time, a valley girl for her diction, and worst of all for a Democrat of perfect pedigree, the next Sarah Palin, the Republican vice presidential nominee who was criticized for displaying flash but little substance.

The print stories, TV news clips and blogs that counted Kennedy's use of "you know" and "um" during a series of interviews the weekend after Christmas took a toll even among a public where those speech patterns are common.

None of it may matter.

That's because she's playing to just one voter—the Democratic governor with the power of appointment—who has plenty of reasons to pick President John F. Kennedy's daughter.

As governor and head of the Democratic Party in the state, Paterson has said he will take advice from his closest advisers in and outside government, including other elected and party officials.

Asia

NKorea mobilizes 100,000 for new year rally

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Tens of thousands of North Koreans rallied Monday in a display of might and loyalty that underscored the regime's guiding "military first" principal amid tensions with rival South Korea.

The government mobilized 100,000 North Koreans for the annual New Year's rally, which honors leader Kim Jong Il and reaffirms full public support for his rule in the year ahead.

Pumping their right fists in unison, they marched through Pyongyang's main Kim Il Sung plaza pledging their loyalty, some waving huge red flags as top officials watched from a viewing stand.

Kim Jong Il did not appear among them in footage broadcast by APTN. The 66-year-old leader has not shown up at a mass event since reportedly suffering a stroke in mid-August, even missing the country's milestone 60th anniversary in September.

But North Korean officials deny the reports of Kim's collapse. They say Kim has been busy touring farms, factories and military units across the country, with state-run media recording some two dozen trips since early October alone.

Most of the reports, photos and footage do not specify an exact location or date, and South Korean officials say they cannot confirm the visits with so little reliable information.

Still, foreign officials and analysts pore over each photo, frame and statements for clues to what's going on in the reclusive communist nation.

For his first trip of the new year, Kim spent the day with soldiers, the Korean Central News Agency said, marking a change from his usual routine of paying tribute to workers at industrial sites or at the grave of his father, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung. The tank unit is North Korea's first; it once fell under his father's command and is considered the birthplace of North Korea's "songun" military policy, the report said.

AP

In this Korean Central News Agency photo released by Korea News Service in Tokyo on Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009, tens of thousands of North Koreans rallied Monday, Jan. 5, 2009 at Pyongyang's main Kim Il Sung plaza in a display of might and loyalty that underscored the regime's guiding "military first" principal amid tensions with rival South Korea.

Muslim states seek UN session on Gaza conflict

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Muslim countries plan to seek a U.N. General Assembly special session to press for a halt to the escalating violence in Gaza, Malaysia's leader said Monday.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Malaysia's permanent representative to the U.N. will hold discussions with other officials in the 57-member Organization of the Islamic Conference, or OIC, on how best to push for such a session.

"I hope the United States and its allies will not impede efforts to convene the special general assembly," Abdullah was quoted as saying by the national news agency, Bernama.

Foreign ministers from OIC countries issued a statement following a meeting in Saudi Arabia over the weekend saying all Muslim nations should cooperate with other U.N. members to call for a special General Assembly session titled "Uniting for Peace."

The U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur said it had no immediate response to Abdullah's statement.

The United States late Saturday blocked approval of a U.N. Security Council statement calling for an immediate cease-fire between Israel and Hamas and expressing serious concern at the escalation of violence, council diplomats said.

Israel sent troops and tanks into Gaza on Saturday after a weeklong aerial bombardment.

At least 512 Palestinians have been killed and more than 2,500 injured since the air attacks began. One Israeli soldier was killed in the ground assault. Israel says it launched the offensive to stop rocket attacks from Hamas-controlled Gaza that have killed several Israelis.

In a separate statement, Abdullah said Israel's ground offensive "is an act of total war which the international community should not tolerate."

Abdullah added that he has authorized $1 million of immediate humanitarian aid from the Malaysian government to be channeled through relief supplies for the Palestinians.

China targets Google in pornography crackdown

BEIJING (AP)—China warned Google and other popular Web portals Monday that they must do more to block pornographic material from reaching Chinese users, the latest in a series of government crackdowns targeting Internet content.

The crackdown focused on pornography but is part of a larger Chinese effort to control freedom of expression and root out material it considers destabilizing, such as sites that criticize the Communist Party, promote democratic reform or advocate Taiwan independence.

Pornography is banned in China but remains widely available on and off the Internet. Popular Chinese Web portals frequently show sexually explicit pictures and provide links to pornographic Web sites.

The announcement said Google and Baidu, China's two most heavily used search engines, had failed to take "efficient" measures after receiving notices from the country's Internet watchdog that they were providing links to pornographic material.

Google asserted that it abides by Chinese law and does not generate pornographic content.

The statement also criticized popular Web portals Sina and Sohu, as well as a number of video sharing sites and popular online bulletin boards such as Tianya, that it said contain problematic photos, blogs and postings.

Jeremy Goldkorn, founder of Danwei.org, a Web site that covers Chinese media issues, said such campaigns happen regularly in China to keep Internet sites in line with the government and the mention of Google and Baidu is meant to send a strong message to the whole industry.

"The fact that they rapped every major Web site on the knuckles ... it is sending a message out to be on their best behavior and that's a system that everyone understands," he said.

Charles Freeman, a China specialist at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the pornography issue was a "stalking horse" for the Chinese government.

"They're looking extensively at political speech, the sort of things traditionally cast under the First Amendment in this country," Freeman said.

He said 2009 is a "very sensitive year politically in China," noting it was 50 years since the Dalai Lama fled Tibet after a failed uprising, 30 years after the democracy wall movement, and 20 years after the crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square.

Taliban whopper: claim 5,220 foreign troops killed

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The Taliban has long exaggerated its military successes, but its figures for 2008 may be the militia's most startling claims yet.

The Taliban claims its forces last year killed 5,220 foreign troops, downed 31 aircraft, destroyed 2,818 NATO and Afghan vehicles and killed 7,552 Afghan soldiers and police.

Though third-party observers can rarely confirm casualty claims on the Afghan battlefield from the Taliban, the Afghan government, the U.S. or NATO, the Taliban's 2008 numbers would appear to be far from the truth.

NATO's member countries announce all troop deaths, providing names, ages and hometowns and how the soldiers were killed. According to an Associated Press tally of those announcements, 286 foreign military personnel died last year in Afghanistan, including 151 Americans and 51 Britons.

The AP's tally for U.S. deaths is less than the 155 listed for Operation Enduring Freedom by the Defense Department, which includes four personnel who supported the war effort but died in incidents outside Afghanistan—two in Djibouti and two from the Marriot hotel bombing in Pakistan.

The Taliban's toll is almost 20 times higher.

Despite the inflated toll, the Taliban have had more success recently. Violence in Afghanistan has spiked in the last two years, and Taliban militants now control wide swaths of countryside. In response, the U.S. is planning to pour up to 30,000 more troops into the country this year.

The insurgents' exaggerations are designed to boost morale inside the Taliban and to attract financing from donors sympathetic to their cause, a U.S. military official and a Taliban expert said.

ASIAN BRIEFS

RP inflation eases to 8 percent in December on declining commodity prices

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Inflation in the Philippines slowed in December to 8 percent as fuel and other basic commodity prices continued to decline, the government said Tuesday. The National Statistics Office said the inflation rate eased from 9.9 percent in November for its fourth straight month of decline after peaking at 12.5 percent in August. The average annual inflation rate shot to 9.3 percent in 2008 from 2.8 percent in 2007. The statistics office attributed the recent downtrend mainly to a drop in the prices of fuel, water and food.

Concerns of civilian deaths rise in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lankan forces overran another village Monday and moved closer to seizing a strategic base from the Tamil Tigers, but concerns are mounting for the hundreds of thousands of civilians living in the rebels' shrinking territory. The government has chased the rebels out of much of their de facto state in the north in recent months—taking their administrative capital of Kilinochchi last week—but the offensive is complicated by the presence of an estimated 300,000 civilians in rebel territory. The rebels now occupy a slice of jungle slightly larger than the city of Los Angeles. As civilians increasingly get in the way of the battle, it could become difficult for the government to fight on without causing an unacceptable loss of life, human rights activists and some Western diplomats said. The government says it has no intention of giving up its recent momentum but will do everything it can to avoid civilian casualties.

Premium tuna fetches $100,000 in Tokyo auction

TOKYO (AP)—Two sushi bar owners paid more than $100,000 for a Japanese bluefin tuna at a Tokyo fish auction Monday, several times the average price and the highest in nearly a decade, market officials said. The 282-pound (128-kilogram) premium tuna caught off the northern coast of Oma fetched 9.63 million yen ($104,700), the highest since 2001, when another Japanese bluefin tuna brought an all-time record of 20 million yen, market official Takashi Yoshida said. Yoshida said the extravagant purchase—about $370 per pound ($817 per kilogram)—went to a Hong Kong sushi bar owner and his Japanese competitor who reached a peaceful settlement to share the big fish. The Hong Kong buyer also paid the highest price at last year's new year event at Tokyo's Tsukiji market, the world's largest fish seller, which holds near-daily auctions. A slightly bigger imported bluefin caught off the eastern United States sold for 1.42 million yen ($15,400) in Monday's auction.

World

Gaza civilian toll rises; diplomats seek truce

GAZA CITY, Gaza (AP)—Israel ignored mounting international calls for a cease-fire Monday and said it won't stop its crippling 10-day assault until "peace and tranquility" are achieved in southern Israeli towns in the line of Palestinian rocket fire.

Israeli forces seized control of high-rise buildings and attacked smuggling tunnels and several mosques in a campaign against Hamas militants that took an increasing toll on civilians. Three young brothers were reported killed during shelling. Palestinian wounded filled hospital corridors.

Arab delegates met with the U.N. Security Council in New York Monday, urging members to adopt a resolution calling for an immediate end to the Israeli attacks and a permanent cease-fire. At the same time, diplomats and European leaders traveled the region in an effort to stop Israel's expanding ground and air offensive.

In the first serious clash in an urban area, Israeli troops and Hamas militants fought a gunbattle on the outskirts of the crowded Gaza City neighborhood of Shajaiyeh, Israeli defense officials said. Details also emerged of an unsuccessful attempt by Hamas fighters to capture Israeli soldiers hours after the ground operation began Saturday with a withering round of artillery fire.

Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Avi Benayahu told Israeli TV the assault was going according to plan with forces sweeping through Palestinian rocket launching locations near the border and the militants suffering many casualties.

But no militant casualties were seen Monday by an Associated Press reporter at Shifa Hospital, the Gaza Strip's largest. Instead, the hospital was overwhelmed with civilians. Bodies were two to a morgue drawer, and the wounded were being treated in hallways because beds were full.

Gaza health officials reported that since the campaign began on Dec. 27 more than 550 Palestinians have been killed and 2,500 wounded, including 200 civilians. U.N. humanitarian chief John Holmes told reporters in New York on Monday that U.N. officials believe at least 500 people have been killed in the fighting and that as many as 25 percent are civilians.

At least 20 Palestinian children were killed during the day, said Dr. Moaiya Hassanain, a health official. Most confirmed deaths have been civilians.

Five Israelis have been killed during the offensive, including a soldier in the ground operation. Heavy Israeli casualties could undermine what has so far been overwhelming public support for the operation.

Jordanian protestors warm themselves near a fire which burns with the letters of the word Gaza in Amman, Jordan, Monday, Jan. 5, 2009.

AP

Victims of Blackwater shooting await guards' trial

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraqis wounded by gunfire in a Baghdad square 15 months ago are awaiting with guarded hopes the beginning of court proceedings against five former private Blackwater Worldwide security guards.

The five men are to appear in a federal court in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday for an initial hearing on charges of manslaughter in the chaotic few minutes of shooting on Sept. 16, 2007 that killed 17 Iraqi civilians and wounded dozens more.

The defendants, who are expected to plead not guilty, contend they opened fire after coming under attack when a car in a State Department convoy they were escorting broke down. But people wounded in the outburst say the shooting was unprovoked.

"It all started when they began shooting without any cause," Samir Hobi, a taxi driver who was sitting in his car at the scene.

"Then the Blackwater vehicles came up on the wrong side and pushed my car away," said Hobi, who suffered a broken leg.

The North Carolina-based Blackwater is the largest contractor providing security in Iraq. Most of its work for the State Department is in protecting U.S. diplomats in Iraq—a job the agency is unable to handle on its own.

Many Iraqis saw the bloodshed in Nisoor Square as a demonstration of American brutality and arrogance and suspected the guards would never be called to account.

"I did not expect a trial to take place. I was really surprised and very happy to hear about the trial," said Farid Walid Hassoun, who was shot in the back as he cowered behind a concrete barrier.

"It never occurred to me that such a thing could happen," taxi driver Baraa Sadoun Ismael, another of the wounded, said of the trial. "Now I believe that justice does exist."

UN *envoy*: Nations must take Guantanamo inmates

VIENNA, Austria (AP)—More nations must take in Guantanamo inmates once the U.S.-run prison closes, the U.N.'s torture investigator said Monday, insisting that many were held simply because they were "in the wrong place at the wrong time."

Manfred Nowak told Austrian radio he hopes more countries will set aside their misgivings and show solidarity with the incoming government of President-elect Barack Obama, who has vowed to shut the detention center in eastern Cuba.

Most European nations have refused to accept Guantanamo inmates, citing national security concerns. Nowak told public broadcaster ORF he understands their reluctance, "since the U.S. government for many years represented (the prisoners) as the most dangerous ever captured."

US inaugurates $700 million embassy in Iraq

BAGHDAD (AP)—The United States inaugurated its largest embassy ever on Monday, a fortress-like compound in the heart of the Green Zone—and the most visible sign of what U.S. officials call a new chapter in relations between America and a more sovereign Iraq.

U.S. Marines raised the American flag over the adobe-colored buildings, which sit on a 104-acre site and has space for 1,000 employees—more than 10 times the size of any other American Embassy in the world.

"Iraq is in a new era and so is the Iraqi-U.S. relationship," Ambassador Ryan Crocker proclaimed.

In perhaps an unintended sign of the new relationship, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki did not attend Monday's ceremony because he was traveling in Iran, a country the U.S. has accused of aiding and arming Iraqi militants.

WORLD BRIEFS

Guatemalan mudslide kills 35, injures 15

GUATEMALA CITY (AP)—Rescuers dug through tons of mud late Monday in search of more victims of a massive landslide that buried a long stretch of highway in northern Guatemala, killing at least 35 coffee workers and travelers using the road. Vice President Rafael Espada said he feared the death toll could rise by at least a dozen more. About 15 other people were injured when the mass of mud and rock roared down a mountain Sunday near the village of Aquil Grande. Dozens of families watched anxiously as 165 rescuers dug through the collapsed mountainside, which continued to rain down rocks and dirt. Rescuers lined up the dead at a cemetery where people tried to identify them. Roadwork along the highway could have triggered the slide, said Angel Estrada, the head of the rescue effort.

Police: Mexican woman in wheelchair flees on foot

MONTERREY, Mexico (AP)—Police say a woman who begged from a wheelchair was caught running from a crime scene on foot in Monterrey, Mexico. Police spokeswoman Sidlayin Robles says 30-year-old Ana Victoria Perez fled on foot after she and her husband allegedly threw a stone through the front window of a furniture store. Perez was a regular fixture along a main Monterrey road, asking for change from motorists as she sat in a wheelchair pushed by her husband. Robles said Monday that the couple apparently planned to rob the furniture store but were scared off by a security guard. They have been charged with vandalism. Police arrested the couple when they returned for the wheelchair.

Pirates attack French vessel off Nigerian coast

PARIS (AP)—Pirates hijacked a French boat and took its nine crew members hostage in the latest attack in some of the world's most dangerous waters off oil-rich southern Nigeria, the boat's owner said Monday. The captain of the *Bourbon Leda* was able to speak with the boat's owners Sunday and said that all nine crew members were unharmed, according to a statement by the company, Bourbon, which provides specialist boats for the oil and gas industry. It said in the statement Monday that it was working to free the crew. Piracy is rampant in the waters off Nigeria with attacks and hostage-taking linked to militants pressing the Nigerian government to send more oil proceeds to the region. Bourbon spokeswoman Stephanie Elbaz said she believed the nine—five Nigerians, two Ghanaians, one person from Cameroon and one from Indonesia—remained on the supply vessel. She said she had no information about the number of pirates or their demands. It was the second time in just more than two months that a boat owned by Bourbon was attacked and those aboard taken hostage.

Campus Life

More and more, schools got game

By MICHAEL ALISON CHANDLER
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

THE WASHINGTON POST
Michael Benson, 15, right, Sophia Makemson, 14, and Eisa Jesus Alloughani, 15, listen as Virginia finance teacher Kimberly Fields gives instructions for a videogame used to teach business skills. Experts say more schools are becoming receptive to learning through gaming.

WASHINGTON—Lifelong gamer Russell Alford, 15, usually has to wait until his homework and chores are finished before he can play Call of Duty 4, but this semester he got to play another video game at school. His finance class at Marshall High School in Fairfax County, Va., designed avatars and saved a virtual city from an oil spill—earning points for teamwork, research on the world's water supply, business ethics and negotiating skills.

As Net-generation teachers reach out to gamers, classrooms across the country are becoming portals to elaborate virtual worlds. Business and science classes are sampling sophisticated software that allows students to try out potential careers, practice skills or explore history through simulated missions in national parks, ancient cities or outer space.

Teachers have long yearned for the rapt attention students lavish on mutants and aliens, but stereotypes of video games as violent or brain-numbing have slowed their entry into schools. While the military and even medical schools are turning to "serious games" or simulations for training, the Software and Information Industry Association estimates that instructional games make up only a tiny portion of the $2 billion-a-year educational software industry.

But lately, researchers and educators say sentiment toward gaming is changing. Advocates argue that games teach vital skills overlooked in the age of high-stakes tests, such as teamwork, decision-making and digital literacy. And they admire the way good games challenge players just enough to keep them engaged and pushing to reach the next level.

"There is a revolution in the understanding of the educational community that video games have a lot of what we need," said Jan Plass, co-director of the Games for Learning Institute, based at New York University and funded by Microsoft to research how video games can help learning.

The Pew Research Center reported in September that 97 percent of youths aged 12 to 17 play video games, and half said they played "yesterday." Time spent glued to the screen is often particularly high in wired, affluent communities such as Fairfax, where a survey this year showed that almost three out of four students play video games or use the computer for non-school-related stuff an hour or more each night.

A new generation of game designers is borrowing from the sophisticated platforms and stunning graphics that captivate students for hours after school. They hope to channel the kind of feverish determination students exhibit when stealing a car in Grand Theft Auto and redirect it toward more wholesome pursuits, such as algebra.

Dimension M, a suite of math games developed by New York-based Tabula Digita, was created in a "first-person shooter" format, though the action figures carry no weapons. In one game, players aim to stop a biodigital virus from taking over the world, while learning about functions and solving equations. Hundreds of schools in Chicago and New York and several Florida school systems are playing the games, which cost $10 to $20 per student for the year.

Another series, Quest Atlantis, developed by educators at Indiana University, takes students into simulated environments, such as Taiga National Park, where they role-play scientists seeking to learn why rivers are depleted of fish. More than 20,000 students around the world logged on to play the free games in the 2007-08 school year, a fourfold increase from the year before.

Compelling games can help schools compete for students' attention, advocates say, even as many teenagers are tackling complex projects on the Internet in their free time.

Outside of school, kids "are writing fan fiction, blogging, designing clothes," said James Paul Gee, a University of Arizona education professor and author of the book "What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy." "They can become an expert in anything by learning on the Internet, and they can find a community to support it."

To make further inroads into the educational market, video game producers must win over teachers who are loaded down with curriculum demands and pressured to improve student test performance.

Timothy J. Magner, director of educational technology for the Education Department, said games could themselves become powerful assessment tools. Computers can capture data about every player move, he said, and teachers can see "at the mouse-click level" how students make decisions and when they struggle.

How to go forward with 'No Child Left Behind'

By MARIA GLOD
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—President-elect Barack Obama has vowed to "fix the failures" of the No Child Left Behind law, which rates schools based on student performance on annual math and reading tests.

The law, one of President Bush's major domestic achievements, was enacted with broad bipartisan support. But that consensus faded, and efforts to reauthorize the law stalled in the past year as lawmakers awaited a new president.

Under the law, schools must reach steadily rising performance goals. Certain schools that fall short face sanctions as severe as a management shake-up.

With Congress poised to begin the debate anew, a charter school advocate, a teachers union leader, a PTA president and a superintendent offer ideas about how to improve the law. They also offer suggestions if Obama and Congress decide to give the next version of the law a new name.

JEANNE ALLEN

Center for Education Reform president

The tests should be bench-marked against NAEP (a test known as "the nation's report card"). If you say that in fourth grade you expect kids to know quadratic equations, you need to show in your state plan that that's what you're measuring in fourth grade.

I think principals and teachers are really smart people. We need to be firm

on the outcome and allow the flexibility locally to figure out how to get there.

We should measure how well schools do from year to year on top of how well we want the ideal fifth-grader to achieve. We need to reward progress in the interim while we work to hit the proficiency standards. I think we should give people a pat on the back for making progress toward the goals.

RANDI WEINGARTEN

American Federation of Teachers president

We need a federal law that is really aligned with how to get continuous sustainable improvement in our education system. How do we address the achievement gap head-on? How do we improve teaching and learning head-on? How do we build a workable accountability system that helps and doesn't punish schools?

As much as educators have a huge role, we don't have the only role. That's why I've talked about community schools. What's happened in the past few years is it has been so out of whack that it has become more of a testing and a blame game than about how we help kids.

We have to have a way that we not only recruit the best and the brightest into teaching, but we keep them.

EDGAR HATRICK

Loudoun County, Va., school superintendent

I think it is a fatally flawed version. It assumes that all children can somehow succeed at the same level, and it also assumes that vastly different measures of success could be allowed state by state and then used comparatively.

My hope is the new law will return to its roots and will focus on children in poverty. They are the most at-risk children in our society. The evidence is clear that when kids don't have good health care, when kids don't have access to cultural and academic stimuli outside the school, they are at a disadvantage from the moment they walk in.

I think the law has got to recognize the limited funding of education by the federal government. For very little money in the game, the federal government has the ability to impose huge changes on local schools. I think that there are ways to shine a spotlight on schools that are both not succeeding and not trying to succeed. I think it doesn't have to be through what I believe are misguided sanctions.

DEBBIE RITCHIE

Maryland PTA president

The federal law requires that there be assessments, but it has been up to each state to create its own. My question to them would be: Are we really comparing apples to apples, or are we comparing apples to bread? The assessment that's being done in Maryland—can we compare it to what's being done in South Dakota?

I don't think we want the federal government to create the assessments. But we should have a standard throughout the United States. What does fourth-grade math look like?

If you don't have reading and math, you can't do anything else. But what I've seen is that everything becomes very focused and narrowed. We're losing arts because we have to get that reading and math in there.

Are we shortchanging our kids in a well-rounded education by having a narrow focus?

Nutrition advocates eye school meals, education

WASHINGTON—With the Child Nutrition and Women, Infants and Children Act set to be reauthorized in 2009, public health advocates are lobbying for the implementation of stricter standards for school breakfast and lunch programs, based on new recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, a branch of the National Academies.

Nutrition standards for school meals were not established until 1994, and public health advocates say they have failed to keep pace with scientific research. Even so, as few as 15 percent of elementary schools and 13 percent of secondary schools met the recommended standards for saturated fat in the 2004-2005 school year, according to an Agriculture Department study. Only 1 percent of schools met the recommended guidelines for limiting sodium.

Advocates also are clamoring for funds to improve nutrition education.

"Research is clear—handing out nutrition brochures does not work," Eileen Kennedy, dean of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, said in testimony before the Senate Agriculture Committee this month. She called for more education for parents about how to prepare healthful meals as well as closer links between school, after-school and parental programs to reinforce nutrition education.

"In the current economic downturn, the role of the child nutrition programs becomes even more critical as an essential part of the nutrition safety net," Kennedy said. ***(The Washington Post)***

Life & Style

Scribner to publish first lady Laura Bush's memoir

First lady Laura Bush, among the most reserved and enigmatic public figures of recent times, will, at last, tell her story.

How much she will disclose remains a mystery.

Bush has agreed to write a memoir with one of the world's oldest publishing houses, Scribner, the house of Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and the first lady's mother-in-law, Barbara Bush. Publication for the book, currently untitled, is scheduled for 2010.

"I am curious about Laura Bush and I believe others—people you would expect to be supporters of a Republican first lady, and other people, too—are just as curious about her," says Scribner publisher and executive vice president Susan Moldow, one of several publishers to meet last fall with the first lady

"She was forthcoming about her own reticence. She understands she has not put herself forward and that this is her chance to share the information she wants to share. I know it will be interesting, in a surprising, unfiltered way."

The potential audience is enormous. Despite eight years in the White House, Laura Bush is essentially unknown to her many admirers, who have speculated about her politics (rumors abound that she's more liberal than her husband), her marriage and a car accident when she was a teenager. A former librarian, Bush is also known as a devoted reader whose favorite authors include Cormac McCarthy, Truman Capote and Toni Morrison.

In a statement issued Monday by Scribner, Bush said that she looked forward to working with the publisher "as I tell the stories of the extraordinary events and people I've met in my life, particularly during my years in the White House."

But rival publishers doubt the information Bush wants to share is the same that the public wants to read; they also question whether her advance—while surely worth millions—matches the $8 million Hillary Rodham Clinton received for "Living History." Executives from two publishing houses who spoke with the first lady said they decided not to offer bids. The executives asked not to be identified, citing the confidentiality of the talks.

Scribner, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Inc., part of CBS Corp., prevailed in an auction involving several publishers, according to Bush's literary representative, Robert Barnett.

Neither Moldow not Barnett would offer financial details, but both say the memoir will be candid. Barnett, whose clients include Hillary Clinton and former President Bill Clinton, disputed concerns by noting that you never "reveal your best material in multi-publisher meetings."

Moldow said she anticipated a lively and fascinating book, and added that she never sought a "tell-all" from the first lady.

"I think she is clearly a very loyal person and she is also not someone you would expect explosive information from," she said. Asked what she hoped for in the book, Moldow said, "I want to learn her view of things; that's what I want to hear."

According to Barnett, Bush has not started the book, but "wants to get right to work on this project when she leaves the White House. It is a high priority for her."

AP

This Dec. 22, 2008 file photo provided by FOX News Sunday, first lady Laura Bush speaks with FOX News Sunday's Chris Wallace during an interview at the FOX studios in Washington.

Bush will have a collaborator—still to be determined—to help her meet the 2010 publishing date. Former first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's memoir "Living History" was released by Simon & Schuster two and a half years after she left the White House, well into her first term as New York senator.

Bush co-authored a children's story with daughter Jenna, but she clearly has more experience reading books than writing them. Moldow says that while Bush offered no writing samples, the first lady's in-person speaking style demonstrated "what a distinctive voice she has."

It will be the collaborator's job, Moldow says, "to capture that, because I don't think people have heard it as clearly as I did."

Moldow says that Bush will help publicize the book. Recent first ladies, including Barbara Bush, have had more dependable appeal with readers than their husbands have had. President George W. Bush said last year that he, too, wants to write a book. Publishers, noting his poor approval ratings, have urged him to wait. ***(AP)***

Mensahin Agradesimiento

We, the family of the late

† Dolores Cabrera Babauta Palacios

extend our sincerest and profound gratitude to all our relatives and friends for your genuine compassion during our time of sorrow. Your comfort, support and prayers provided us with much ease and reassurance as we mourn over our greatest loss. Your condolences and acts of grace considerably lessen our pain and sadness and we will be forever grateful.

Our deepest appreciation goes out to the medical team of Dr. Larry Achuna; Dr. Vicente Lopez; and the Ninth Floor Staff of the Asian Pacific Hospital in the Republic of the Philippines, as well as, the CNMI Medical Referral Staff; Dr. Kotheimer; Dr. Sharma; Dr. Chevy; Dr. Wijay; and the staff of the Emergency Room and Medical Surgical Unit (C and D Side) of the Commonwealth Health Center.

To Father Charlie Borja of St. Jude Parish and Father Rey Rosal of San Vicente Parish, we sincerely thank you for your patience, kindness, prayers, and your devotion to God and his people. With much gratitude to Ana Kileleman and Rosa Blas for your time and kindness you afforded our family and for the nightly rosaries. To Lou Saures and the St. Jude Choir, thank you for willingly gracing our beloved with your choir service.

To Nino Jose Ch. and Nina Rita S. Camacho, thank you for your kindness, generosity, and unending love and support.

To Bishop Tomas A. Camacho, un Dangkulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase, for your genuine concern and support, and most especially for the comfort and guidance you bestowed upon our beloved and family.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase; Ghilissow; and Thank You!

Joseph, Jocelyn, Jodie, Joseph Jr., Jhace, & Family

Album sales plunge, digital downloads up

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Music sales have continued to slump in 2008 as the increased number of downloads of digital tracks failed to make up for a plunge in the sale of compact discs.

Year-end sales figures released Wednesday by The Nielsen Co. show total album sales, including album equivalents made up of single digital tracks, fell to 428.4 million units, down 8.5 percent from 500.5 million in 2007.

Physical album sales fell 20 percent to 362.6 million from 450.5 million, while digital album sales rose 32 percent to a record 65.8 million units.

Digital track sales, such as those conducted in Apple Inc.'s iTunes Music Store, were up 27 percent from last year, breaking the 1 billion mark for the first time at 1.07 billion.

The report continues a troubling trend for the recording industry, which has a harder time maintaining profits when consumers buy single songs instead of albums. The number of transactions rose 10.5 percent to 1.5 billion, although the figure treats single track and whole album purchases the same.

"You can see the overall unit sales as a positive, but their model is really built on album sales and that just continues to decline," said Silvio Pietroluongo, director of charts for Billboard magazine.

"Music consumption has never been at a higher clip, it's just a matter of trying to turn it into revenue," he added.

Some record labels are making progress. Craig Kallman, chief executive of Warner Music Group Corp.'s Atlantic Records, whose artists include Kid Rock and T.I., said his label passed a milestone in the year to September by having its digital revenue exceed that from physical CD sales.

Actors Bacon, Sedgwick among Madoff victims

NEW YORK (AP)—Call it six degrees of Bernard Madoff.

Kevin Bacon and wife Kyra Sedgwick are among the many victims of the massive Ponzi scheme run by the disgraced New York money manager.

Bacon's publicist, Allen Eichhorn, confirmed Tuesday that the couple had investments with Madoff. He wouldn't say how much money Bacon, whose most recent film is "Frost/Nixon," and "The Closer" star Sedgwick might have lost.

Madoff told federal investigators that his investment business was "a lie" that lost as much as $50 billion.

Other Hollywood victims have included a charity linked to director Steven Spielberg and his DreamWorks partner Jeffrey Katzenberg, and screenwriter Eric Roth, whose credits include "Forrest Gump" and "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button."

In this Sept. 21, 2008 file photo, actor Kevin Bacon, left, and his wife, actress Kyra Sedgwick pose on the press line at the TV Guide Emmy After Party in Los Angeles.

AP

Death certificate says Travolta son killed by seizure

FREEPORT, Bahamas (AP)—Jett Travolta's body shows no sign of head trauma and his death certificate says he was killed by a "seizure," an undertaker said Monday, as the 16-year-old's celebrity parents prepared for a Florida funeral.

Glen Campbell, assistant director of the Bahamian funeral home handling the remains of John Travolta's son, told The Associated Press that the body is in "great condition," despite police officials who had said the teen hit his head on a bathtub.

Authorities didn't release the results of an autopsy performed Monday, but Campbell saw the body and the death certificate, which was based on its findings.

"The only cause of death that was listed was 'seizure'," he said.

Late Monday, a black hearse traveled from the funeral home to the airport after the family said it would bury the teen near their home in Ocala, Florida. Two white jets waited as police in dress uniforms blocked access to the tarmac.

Jett Travolta had a history of seizures and was found unconscious in a bathroom Friday at a family vacation home on Grand Bahama Island.

"We are heartbroken that our time with him was so brief," actor parents John Travolta and Kelly Preston said Sunday in a public statement. "We will cherish the time we had with him for the rest of our lives."

Travolta tried CPR to revive his son, who may have died in his arms before an emergency medical technician took over, Usmagazine.com reported, citing Travolta attorneys Michael McDermott and Michael Ossi. They did not respond to calls from the AP on Monday.

Travolta, 54, and Preston, 46, have said Jett became very sick when he was 2 years old and was diagnosed with Kawasaki Syndrome, an illness that leads to inflamed blood vessels. Preston has blamed household cleaners and fertilizers and said a detoxification program based on teachings from the Church of Scientology helped improve his health, according to People magazine.

Police said in a statement that Jett had not been seen since Thursday when a caretaker, Jeff Kathrain, found him unconscious late Friday morning. But McDermott said that wrongly left the impression that Jett was unsupervised. He said two nannies were with Jett throughout the evening, and he does not believe the teen was in the bathroom for very long.

About a dozen security guards and Bahamian police officers patrolled around the luxury Old Bahama Bay resort community Sunday where the Travoltas have their home. The white-sand beach in front of the suites was closed.

The couple also has an 8-year-old daughter, Ella Bleu.

Bahamian Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham sent condolences to the Travolta family and said the autopsy is a formality the country requires in cases of sudden death to rule out foul play.

AP

In this image released by Rogers & Cowan public relations, actor John Travolta is shown with his son Jett in an undated family photo.

LG's high-definition TVs to stream Netflix vids directly

NEW YORK (AP)—Netflix Inc. has come up with another way to get movies to people without sending DVDs in the mail.

In a partnership announced Monday, LG Electronics will start selling high-definition TV sets that stream Netflix videos directly from the Internet, without an additional device. The deal marks the first time Netflix's streaming service will be embedded in a television.

Netflix, still best known for its online DVD rental service, offers about 12,000 movies and TV shows for instant streaming over the Internet, for no additional cost to subscribers who pay at least $9 per month for a DVD rental plan.

Those streamed movies can be watched on a computer, or sent to a TV through an increasing number of devices, including a $100 unit made by Silicon Valley startup Roku Inc. Other partnerships enable Netflix to pump its video library to TVs through Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox 360 video game consoles or recorders made by TiVo Inc. LG and Samsung Electronics Co. also sell Blu-ray DVD players compatible with the streaming service.

Also on Monday, Amazon.com Inc. said it is making its video streaming service available on the Roku player. The service offers about 40,000 movies and TV shows, including titles not currently available through Netflix streaming on Roku, such as "Pineapple Express."

Piping movies directly to TV sets is the natural evolution of the video streaming service, said Reed Hastings, the chief executive of Netflix.

"The TV symbolizes the ultimate destination," he said.

That idea—shared by Sony Corp., which already streams feature films and TV shows directly to its Bravia televisions—is still in its early stages. Netflix's streaming service taps a library of 12,000 titles, while the company's DVD menu numbers more than 100,000 titles.

Hastings expects that gap will "definitely narrow" over time, but he noted that DVDs maintain an advantage over streaming, which is that "they are very profitable" for film studios.

Tim Alessi, director of product development for LG Electronics USA, said the broadband TVs will sell for roughly $200 to $300 more than a regular HDTV set.

In Celebration of His New Life

Junior Aikichy Lepwach

"Jun"

July 18, 1974 – January 4, 2009

Survived by his:

Wife: Julita L. Lepwach

Children: Jackeline Marie Lepwach
Tina Tricia Lepwach
Dioniso Junior Lepwach
Stiven Hain Lepwach

Mother: Emele A Lepwach

Father: Aikichy Stiven Lepwach

On Saturday, January 10, 2009, Prayer Service will begin at 10:00am at Nuestra Señora dela Paz Memorial Chapel, Cabrera Center. Memorial Service will be at 1:00pm and immediately followed by internment services at Tanapag Cemetery.

Thank you for your prayers.

Julita Ledesma Lepwach and Children
Aikichy & Emele Lepwach

'Dark Knight' vies for Producers Guild best pic

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Batman blockbuster "The Dark Knight," slighted in earlier Hollywood honors, was among best-picture nominees Monday for the Producers Guild of America Awards.

Other best-picture nominees were Brad Pitt's romantic fantasy "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," Ron Howard's Richard Nixon saga "Frost/Nixon," Sean Penn's Harvey Milk film biography "Milk" and Danny Boyle's rags-to-riches tale "Slumdog Millionaire."

Hollywood's biggest blockbuster in a decade and one of the year's most-acclaimed films, "The Dark Knight" missed out on a best-picture slot for Sunday's Golden Globes and was overlooked for an ensemble cast nomination at the Screen Actors Guild Awards.

The Producers Guild lineup generally is a close match of best-picture nominees for the Academy Awards. The guild picks could give "The Dark Knight" and other contenders a last-minute nudge for the Oscars, whose nomination balloting closes Jan. 12. Oscar nominations will be announced Jan. 22.

AP

In this image released by Warner Bros., Heath Ledger starring as The Joker, is shown in a scene from "The Dark Knight."

Nominated for best animated feature by the Producers Guild were the adventure "WALL-E."

Contenders for television comedy: "Curb Your Enthusiasm," "Entourage," "The Office, "30 Rock" and "Weeds." The TV drama nominees: "Boston Legal," "Damages," "Dexter," "Lost" and "Mad Men."

Winners will be announced at a Jan. 24 ceremony in Hollywood. Other nominees:

Best documentary: "Man on Wire," "Standard Operating Procedure" and "Trouble in the Water."

Long-form television: "24: Redemption," "Bernard and Doris," "John Adams," "A Raisin in the Sun" and "Recount."

Nonfiction television: "Deadliest Catch," "Frontline," "Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-List," "60 Minutes" and "This American Life."

Live TV and competition programs: "The Amazing Race," "The Colbert Report," "Project Runway," "Top Chef" and "Real Time with Bill Maher."

QVC will sell memorabilia at Obama's inauguration

NEW YORK (AP)—QVC is traveling to Washington to mark President-elect Barack Obama's inauguration this month—and is bringing along plenty of coins, stamps, jewelry and even a small handbag to sell.

The retail network has already sold more than 100,000 items related to Obama's election and sees the inauguration as an opportunity to reach far beyond the group of people regularly interested in political collectibles.

Obama

"Frankly, if we were not at the inauguration, we would feel like we were not doing our job," said Doug Rose, vice president of multichannel programming for the retail giant, which is available in 94 million American homes and had sales totaling $7.4 billion in 2007.

QVC will show portions of the parade and conduct interviews with spectators, then air live on the night of Jan. 20 from the Creative Coalition's inaugural ball. Host Leah Williams will be decked out in an inaugural gown.

Obama's inauguration has attracted plenty of interest from TV networks, not only the traditional broadcast and cable news outlets, but specialized venues such as BET and Nickelodeon that don't normally pay attention to live political events.

"We're trying to give the audience a flavor of what the event is like, from the event," Rose said. "We will try to give them a sense of the electricity in the air."

Among the items QVC has been selling since the election are a Barack Obama stamp collection, with stamps from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Grenada, St. Vincent and The Grenadines ($38.88). One set has an Obama-Biden half dollar coin and a 1939 stamp depicting George Washington taking the first oath of office ($23.75). An Obama throw blanket is marked down from $41 to $36.84.

Several products are set to debut within the next few weeks. For $200, a shopper can have a coin set with each of the 44 presidents on a South Dakota quarter. A gold presidential pocket watch with Obama's image will sell for $90. A coin and stamp set commemorating Martin Luther King Day and Obama's inauguration is $20. And QVC will also sell a portfolio of newspaper front pages from inauguration day.

Some of QVC's designers are at work, too, making a simulated pearl necklace and a small handbag.

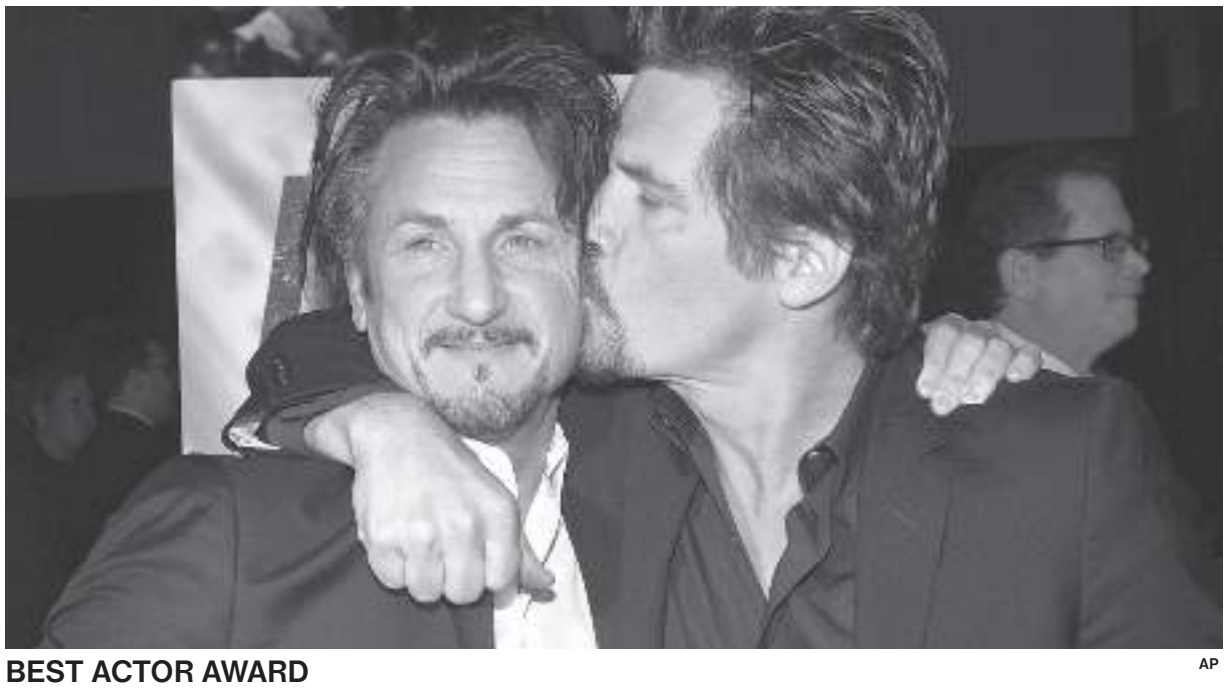
QVC, which began operation in 1986, sold inauguration-related items in 1997, 2001 and 2005. Only in 1997 did the network televise from Washington.

Weeks before the event, the company has nearly reached its previously best sales figures marking a presidential transition, from 1997, and is certain to go well past that standard this year.

QVC's competitor, the Home Shopping Network, isn't going to Washington, but it will telecast eight one-hour specials the weekend before the inauguration hawking medallions, porcelain plates, pocket watches and the like. HSN offered an Obama coin set the weekend after the election, with $3 million in sales over a few hours, spokesman Brad Bohnert said.

And they're not the only places to find Obama memorabilia, either. ShopNBC is offering Obama coin sets and throw blankets. The New York Times Store offers framed photographs, a framed copy of the front page announcing Obama's election victory and an Obama jigsaw puzzle.

NBC is also selling a DVD compilation of Obama speech highlights and NBC News coverage of the campaign.



AP

BEST ACTOR AWARD

Best Actor winner Sean Penn, left, receives a kiss from 'Milk' co-star and Best Supporting Actor winner Josh Brolin at the 2008 New York Film Critic's Circle Awards at Strata on Monday, Jan. 5, 2009 in New York.

New 'Bachelor' Jason Mesnick says he's engaged

NEW YORK (AP)—Though he wasn't picked in the finale of "The Bachelorette," Jason Mesnick isn't just giving love another shot—he says he's found it.

Mesnick, ABC's newest "Bachelor," says he's engaged to one of the women who compete for his affection on the 13th season of the reality series, which was to premiere Monday.

The 32-year-old accountant has finished filming "The Bachelor," but can't reveal his pick until the finale, which will air this spring.

Mesnick says being pursued by 25 women made him empathetic to DeAnna Pappas, who chose snowboarder Jesse Csincsak over him during the "Bachelorette" season finale.

"It gives you a lot more respect for what she had to go through," Mesnick said.

Csincsak and Pappas, co-host of Lifetime's "Get Married," have since broken up.

This time around, "The Bachelor" has a new twist: There's a child in the mix—Mesnick's 3-year-old son Tyler. Mesnick checked with Ty's pediatrician and a psychologist before exposing him to the show's unique situation and any separation involved.

"He's always in the forefront of my mind," Mesnick said.

In this image released by ABC, Jason Mesnick is shown in a promotional photo for the upcoming ABC series "The Bachelor," premiering Monday, Jan. 5, 2009 at 8:00 p.m. EDT.

AP

Cruise says church helped him overcome dyslexia

MADRID, Spain (AP)—Actor Tom Cruise said Scientology teachings helped him overcome childhood dyslexia, a Spanish magazine reported.

Cruise was quoted by Spanish magazine XL Semanal as saying he was diagnosed with the learning disability when he was 7 years old.

Cruise said he was often anxious, frustrated and bored as a youth and couldn't concentrate in class, the magazine reported on its Web site Sunday.

The magazine quoted Cruise as saying he was functionally illiterate when he graduated from school in 1980, but learned to read perfectly as an adult through Scientology technology.

XL Semanal said the interview was conducted in Los Angeles, but did not say when. A transcript of Cruise's original comments in English was not available.

The Church of Scientology was established in 1945 by science-fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, and claims 10 million members around the world. Cruise and fellow actor John Travolta among its more famed followers.

AP

In this file photo of Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2008 Tom Cruise arrives for a taping of "The Late Show with David Letterman," in New York.

Patricia Arquette files for divorce

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Patricia Arquette has filed for divorce from her actor-husband.

Arquette filed for divorce from Thomas Jane in Los Angeles on Monday, citing irreconcilable differences. The couple, who were married in May 2006, have a 5-year-old daughter, Harlow Olivia Calliope Jane.

Arquette, the Emmy-winning star of the NBC show "Medium," is seeking custody of their daughter, with visitation rights for Jane.

Jane, who appeared in the 2007 film "The Mist" and 2004's "The Punisher," was placed on a year's probation in September after pleading no contest to a drunken driving count in California's Kern County.

In this Jan. 28, 2007 file photo, Thomas Jane and Patricia Arquette arrive at the 13th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles.

AP

Polanski lawyer claims LA Superior Court is biased

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A lawyer for Roman Polanski is accusing the Los Angeles Superior Court of bias and prejudice against the movie director, and is seeking removal of his case to the California Judicial Council for resolution.

Polanski has been a fugitive for 30 years in a notorious sex case involving a 13-year-old girl. He filed a request last month to dismiss the charge against him on grounds of prosecutorial and judicial misconduct.

In documents filed Monday, attorney Chad Hummel claims statements by a court spokesman since then showed that the courts have prejudged at least one issue—whether Polanski must personally appear in court on Jan. 21 for his request to be considered.

Monday's motion claims the court and the Los Angeles County district attorney's office have attempted to avoid scrutiny of alleged misconduct during Polanski's original case.

Rebecca Romijn and Jerry O'Connell have twin girls

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Rebecca Romijn and Jerry O'Connell are new parents—times two.

A publicist for the "Ugly Betty" actress says twin daughters Dolly Rebecca Rose and Charlie Tamara Tulip were born Dec. 28. They are the couple's first children.

Publicist Lewis Kay said in a statement Monday that "mother, father and both girls are all home and doing well."

Romijn, 36, and O'Connell, 34, were married in 2007.

O'Connell starred in the TV series "Crossing Jordan" and "Carpoolers." His screen credits include "Stand by Me" and "Jerry Maguire."

AP

In this Sept. 8, 2007 file photo, actress Rebecca Romijn, left, and actor Jerry O'Connell pose on the press line at the 3rd Annual Elyse Walker Pink Party in Santa Monica, Calif.

Funeral held for widow of 'Star Trek' creator

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Funeral services were held for Majel Barrett Roddenberry, "Star Trek" creator Gene Roddenberry's widow who played Nurse Christine Chapel in the original sci-fi TV series.

Friends, family and Trekkies were among more than 250 people who attended the funeral Sunday at a Los Angeles cemetery. Roddenberry died of leukemia at her Bel-Air home Dec. 18. She was 76.

Among the mourners were "Star Trek" stars Nichelle Nichols, George Takei and Walter Koenig.

Three people wore Star Fleet Academy formal tunics, and many others sported "Star Trek" rings, pins or medallions.

Roddenberry was involved in the "Star Trek" universe for more than four decades. She played the dark-haired Number One in the original pilot, but metamorphosed into the blond, miniskirted Nurse Chapel in the 1966-69 TV series. She had smaller roles in all the show's TV successors.

Woman's confidence shaken by betrayal of her fiance

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: Two years ago, I caught my fiance cheating on me. I was devastated. In my heart I don't think he would do it again, but still I find myself looking through his e-mails, checking phone records, etc. I find myself crying hysterically and replaying the moment I found out he was cheating over and over again in my head. It's driving me insane. I want to forgive him, but I don't think I can.

Can you please help me find a way to let go of the past and return to the confident me?

LIVING IN THE PAST IN PHOENIX

DEAR LIVING IN THE PAST: I wish you had written me sooner. You and your fiance may need couples therapy. His willingness to participate would prove that he's willing to do everything he can to reassure you that he won't cheat again. It may also help you both understand why it happened, and help you to erase the old tapes playing in your head.

However, if this doesn't work, accept that you should break the engagement—because a marriage without trust is missing the very foundation of the relationship.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I'm 16 and know in my heart that I'm gay, even though I'd give anything not to be. So far, I have kept this to myself, but I don't think I can keep it within forever.

Please tell me how you "come out." I am worried sick about what will happen, since my parents belong to a church that believes homosexuality is a terrible sin.

Will my parents still love me? Will my friends reject me? Will my sister, who I've always been close to, be afraid to keep sharing a room with me?

As hard as I have tried, I can't change the feelings I have inside, so I know I have to deal with this, but I don't know what to do. Please help me.

TORMENTED GIRL IN LOUISIANA

DEAR TORMENTED GIRL: I can only imagine the stress and anxiety you are experiencing. My heart goes out to you.

As you clearly point out in your letter, sexual orientation is not a choice, but something a person is born with. Not knowing your parents or your inner circle of friends, I can't predict how they will react if you tell them you are gay. But if your instincts tell you that your family will react badly, then I advise you to wait to come out until you are out of their house and self-supporting.

In the meantime, allow me to share two helpful resources. The first is PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays). This organization has been around since the early 1980s, and from it you will receive specific advice on how to deal with your parents. Its Web site is www.pflag.org, and I highly recommend it.

The second is the Trevor Helpline, a nationwide, 24-hour crisis helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning young people. Its toll-free number is (866) 488-7386. You can find out more by going to www.thetrevorproject.org.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Six years ago my 16-year-old daughter was killed by a drunk driver. Just the other day I found some thank-you cards I thought I had sent. I also know that at the end I just couldn't write any more thank yous because of my grief. Should I mail the cards after all this time?

STILL WONDERING IN SAN DIEGO

DEAR STILL WONDERING: Yes, you should. But when you do, include a short note explaining exactly what you have said to me. People who love and care about you will understand.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

THIS IS THE FINEST SNOWBALL EVER MADE!
PAINSTAKINGLY HAND-CRAFTED INTO A PERFECT SPHERE FROM A SECRET MIXTURE OF SLUSH, ICE, DIRT, DEBRIS AND FINE POWDER SNOW, THIS IS THE ULTIMATE WINTER WEAPON!
YES, THIS MARVEL OF CRYSTALLINE ENGINEERING WI...
WHAP!
ANOTHER CASUALTY OF THE SEDUCTION OF ART.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

THESE POLITICIANS ARE ALL A BUNCH OF CROOKS! I'M THINKING ABOUT RUNNING FOR OFFICE!
WHY WOULD ANYONE VOTE FOR YOU?
FOR ONE THING, I HAVE NO SKELETONS IN MY CLOSET.
SURE YOU DO.
OH YEAH. WE SHOULD REALLY CONSIDER BUYING TRASH CANS.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

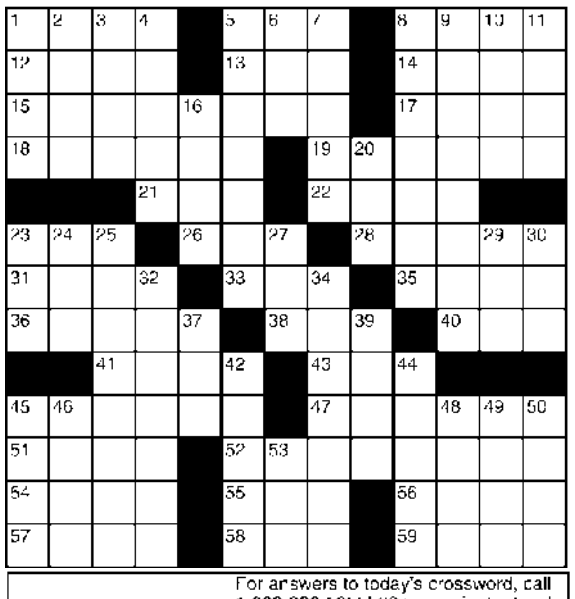
ACROSS
1 Basilica section
5 Chart
8 Pinnacle
12 Like some dorms
13 Lamb's dam
14 Gunky stuff
15 Trouble
17 Low-voiced woman
18 "Seinfeld" role
19 Skips a phoneme
21 Neither mate
22 Galvanization matter
23 Bonfire residue
26 Bottom line
28 "The Lord is my shepherd, ..." e.g.
31 Italy's silhouette
33 Party bowlful
35 Despot
36 Contestant's postcard
38 Glutton
40 Type squares
41 Sought restitution
43 Chic, to Austin Powers
45 Antiknock rating
47 Blood fluids
51 Avoid at all costs
52 Loss of courage
54 Took a powder
55 Citric beverage
56 Unravel
57 Dispatches, mob-style
58 "Of course"
59 Harvard rival

DOWN
1 Hue the run
2 Motel amenity
3 — good example
4 Buzz Aldrin's real name
5 Preprinted, as postage
6 Shock partner
7 Actress Rosie
8 Opposing
9 Unsolved mystery
10 Speck
11 Grand verse
16 Unsigned (Abbr.)
20 Back talk
23 $5 portrait
24 Bart, to Homer
25 Something exceptionally good
27 Gratuity
29 Felon's flight
30 "— Doubtfire"
32 Those favoring a classless society?
34 Zits
37 Longing
39 Prospector's hope
42 Rot
44 Cartoon duck
45 Scandinavian city
46 Swedish Muppet
48 Antitoxins
49 Repast
50 Eyelid woe
53 Rhyming tribute

Solution time: 21 mins.

M	O	T	H	■	S	P	A	■	N	A	Y	S
A	C	R	E	■	P	A	S	■	O	G	E	E
S	H	A	M	R	O	C	K	■	C	U	■	E
T	O	Y	■	I	R	F	■	S	K	F	■	N
■	■	■	C	O	I	■	W	■	N	■	■	■
■	■	C	H	T	■	B	O	A	R	O	W	S
A	V	E	R	■	Y	A	K	■	O	B	O	E
D	E	N	I	Z	E	N	■	F	L	I	N	T
■	■	■	S	A	W	■	N	■	L	■	■	■
S	H	A	R	P	■	C	A	N	■	Y	E	S
N	O	I	S	■	R	E	C	K	W	F	I	L
O	P	E	C	■	C	A	H	■	A	L	S	O
W	F	F	K	■	A	I	F	■	G	I	F	F

Yesterday's answer 1-7



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: David Yost, 40; Nicolas Cage, 45; Katie Couric, 52; Kenny Loggins, 61

Happy Birthday: Your integrity and fair play will help you win. Strength and courage will get you through even when someone you care about does not agree. A change in vocation or educational direction will help you improve your lifestyle. Be smart and make your moves swiftly. Your numbers are 8, 13, 16, 20, 26, 38, 43

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Get involved—you can make a difference. The more effort you put into helping others, the better connections you will make. Put the past behind you and you will gain ground much more quickly. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't let things get to you or you will fall short of your goals and may disappoint someone who is counting on you. Now is the time to look beyond, not dwell on the present situation. What you can accomplish over time will count. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Travel courses or lifestyle changes will all benefit you long-term. Sharing your concerns and ideas with people you respect will bring you great satisfaction and inspire you to do more to achieve your goals. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Don't think everyone has more to offer than you do. You can excel if you put your mind to it and your passionate approach can impress and enhance any deal or proposal you make. A prosperous venture is within reach. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You have to let others see your capabilities if you want to be taken seriously. Lend a helping hand. You belong in a position of leadership but you must first gain respect. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Do what is in your own best interest, not what someone else wants you to do for him or her. Someone in a position to help you will recognize your strength and give you a chance to advance. Networking will lead to personal and professional partnerships. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Stop waiting to see what everyone else is doing and forge ahead on your own. You may want to consider making a residential move or check out a location that will be more conducive to work. Don't rule out making a change. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't let anyone confuse you or put you in an awkward position. You have to maintain control if you want to reach your goals. Keep things simple and refuse to be tempted by those telling you that you must go big or forget it. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): If you don't keep promises, you will ruin your reputation and the chance of getting the help you will want in the future. Take stock of what's required of you and handle the people and situations you face with honesty and integrity. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't leave anything to chance. Double check your personal papers, making sure that everything is in order before you start to plan where and how you will spend your money. Long-term success will come from masterminding your every move. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): You may be torn between what you should do and what you want to do. Emotional issues will be demanding but be careful not to give in for the wrong reason. A partnership can be good but step back if things don't appear to be equal. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Voice your opinion and you will get results. Don't be afraid to diversify in order to get more out of the people you work with. A relationship you once had can now be renewed. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are strong, steady and play-to-win. You are emotional, adaptable and able to judge fairly.

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EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			3	2	4			
		4				2		
	2	9				6	1	
4								1
6								8
	3	7	5		1	9	6	
			8		7			
		8				5		
		1	2	5	9	3		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/07

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

2	7	8	5	6	3	4	1	9
4	5	9	1	2	7	6	3	8
6	1	3	9	4	8	5	2	7
1	6	5	4	3	9	8	7	2
3	2	4	7	8	6	1	9	5
9	8	7	2	5	1	3	6	4
8	9	2	3	1	4	7	5	6
7	3	6	8	9	5	2	4	1
5	4	1	6	7	2	9	8	3

Difficulty Level ★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

ARBORS Solution: 4 letters

S	A	P	O	R	C	L	I	M	B	E	R	R	N	N
P	U	B	U	R	H	S	H	A	(F)	T	A	E	E	O
F	L	P	S	T	O	L	P	L	R	(A)	D	W	E	I
G	L	A	P	D	O	O	W	E	E	R	(E)	O	R	S
I	N	A	S	O	D	O	L	O	A	N	C	(L)	C	N
N	R	I	I	I	R	L	I	C	G	X	A	F	S	E
I	E	O	W	G	I	T	I	L	A	N	L	P	L	I
E	W	E	N	S	A	C	A	U	D	T	I	E	A	X
R	O	F	L	P	I	N	E	S	B	N	E	R	I	E
W	B	O	R	Y	D	K	C	E	D	T	U	G	R	C
E	C	O	T	E	T	A	R	L	S	S	R	O	E	I
A	N	R	S	N	P	S	E	A	T	A	S	L	T	T
V	E	I	A	E	L	U	T	I	P	E	I	A	A	T
E	G	L	V	F	E	N	C	E	S	H	Z	S	M	A
N	P	O	L	Y	M	E	R	E	T	L	E	H	S	L

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Axle, Bower, Build, Cedar, Climber, Crop, Deck, Design, Extension, Fences, Flat, Flower, Garden, Gate, Grape, Grow, Interweave, Iron, Landscape, Lattice, Leaf, Material, New England, Panel, Park, Patio, Pergolas, Pines, Plant, Plastic, Plots, Polymer, Roof, Rose, Rustic, Screen, Shaft, Shelter, Shrub, Size, Spindle, Steel, Style, Support, Swing, Tree, Trellis, Tule, Vine, Wood

Yesterday's Answer: Sweepstake

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COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
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HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

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PROMOTIONAL & OPEN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT

It is the policy of the Board of Education, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, that the Public School Personnel System shall be applied and administered according to the principles of equal employment opportunity as defined by the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Public Law 6 - 10, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, handicap or place of origin. Applicants for this position must be a U.S. Citizen or be eligible and authorized to work in the U.S., including the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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Texas rallies past Ohio State in Fiesta

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP)—Left out of the national title game, Colt McCoy and Texas made the most of their trip to the Fiesta Bowl.

They just hope they did enough to impress poll voters.

McCoy hit Quan Cosby for a 26-yard touchdown with 16 seconds to play, lifting the third-ranked Longhorns to a 24-21 victory over No. 10 Ohio State on Monday night. The dramatic strike capped an 11-play, 78-yard drive that took only 1:42.

"It doesn't feel any better than to come from behind and win," Texas coach Mack Brown said. "It was just a classic, really, between Texas and Ohio State, the way it should be."

When it ended, Texas players rushed onto the field, then gathered in front of the band and sang "The Eyes of Texas" with jubilant fans.

As exhilarating as the victory was, it may not have been dominant enough to persuade voters that the Longhorns (12-1) deserve a share of the national championship. Because they were locked out of the Bowl Championship Series title game, Texas' only chance is The Associated Press Top 25.

McCoy had a message for the pollsters: "I don't think there's anybody in the country who can beat us at this point."

The Buckeyes (10-3) nearly did.

They flirted with the upset behind quarterbacks Terrelle Pryor and Todd Boeckman but instead went down to a third straight BCS bowl loss - a defeat that left the Big Ten 1-6 in this postseason.

AP

Texas quarterback Colt McCoy celebrates as he scores against Ohio State during the third quarter of the Fiesta Bowl NCAA college football game in Glendale, Ariz., Monday, Jan. 5, 2009.

It didn't help that Buckeyes tailback Chris "Beanie" Wells, who rushed for 106 yards on 16 carries, missed much of the second half with a concussion.

"That's the problem in tight ballgames like this," Ohio State coach Jim Tressel said. "Two outstanding teams, sometimes you finish it (and) the game ends when you are the one ahead, and sometimes the game ends when you're not."

The Longhorns rebounded after Ohio State had taken a 21-17 lead on a 15-yard run by Dan Herron with 2:05 to go.

That score came five minutes after Boeckman hit Pryor for a 5-yard score to cut Texas' lead to 17-15. Pryor's pass on the 2-point conversion was incomplete.

Boeckman completed five of 11 passes for 110 yards and a touchdown. Pryor was 5-for-14 for 66 yards, and also ran for 78 yards on 15 carries.

Brown, who once coached Vince Young to a national title, was impressed by Pryor, a rangy freshman.

"He will be a guy that's in a Heisman race, and it may be sooner than we think because he is a leader," Brown said.

But this night belonged to McCoy, himself a Heisman Trophy runner-up. He completed a school-record 41 of 59 passes for 414 yards and two touchdowns, ran for a score and was picked off once.

McCoy may have launched his candidacy for the 2009 award with a memorable march through the din of sold-out University of Phoenix Stadium, which was split between fans wearing burnt orange and others decked out in scarlet and gray.

Down 21-17 with 2:05 to play, McCoy calmly led the Longhorns down the field. He said he never doubted they would score.

"I can't think of a better place to be at that point," McCoy said.

On the touchdown, Cosby caught a short pass, slipped a tackle and sprinted toward the goal line before diving into the end zone.

"He made a play. I gave him a good ball," McCoy said. "I can't explain the feeling that we have right now. To have the faith and confidence in each other that we do, man, that was awesome."

McCoy completed seven of 10 passes for 76 yards on the final march and ran for the other 2 yards.

Before the touchdown, the biggest completion came on fourth-and-3 to James Kirkendoll at the Ohio State 40. The Buckeyes demanded a review, but the spot was upheld, setting the stage for the winning touchdown.

"The (official) closest to the ball spotted it one place and the guy from the other side said he had a better vantage point," Tressel said.

For most of the night, the Buckeyes stifled the high-powered Longhorns, who averaged 43.9 points this season but mustered only a field goal in the first half. They didn't lead until a nifty third-quarter touchdown run by McCoy.

The Longhorns finished in a three-way tie atop the rugged Big 12 South and thought their 10-point victory over Oklahoma should have put them in the conference title game. But Oklahoma was declared the division winner on a BCS standings tiebreaker, and the Sooners ripped Missouri in the Big 12 playoff to earn a trip to the national championship.

"This team started this way and finished this way, and they're obviously one of the best teams in the country if not the best," Brown said.

The Longhorns didn't look like it early on. Texas brought Bevo, its steer mascot, but left its offense back in Austin, at least in a sluggish first half.

The Longhorns failed to score in the first quarter. Texas was shut out in only four quarters all season—and only once in the first quarter, in a 39-33 loss at Texas Tech on Nov. 1.

Ryan Pretorius' 30-yard field goal with 5:39 left in the second quarter sent Ohio State to a 6-3 halftime lead.

Texas' best chance came late in the second, when McCoy smartly marched the Longhorns from their own 9 to the Ohio State 16 in 47 seconds.

But on third-and-2 at the Buckeyes 16 and 9 seconds to go, McCoy threw perhaps his worst pass of the season. McCoy lobbed the ball toward Cosby at the goal line, but safety Anderson Russell picked it off to kill the threat.

Had McCoy thrown the ball into the seats, the Longhorns would have had time for a chip-shot field goal. But they went into the dressing room still down by three.

It didn't take McCoy long to atone for the miscue.

On Texas' first possession of the second half, he scored on a terrific 14-yard run to give the Longhorns their first lead. Taking a shotgun snap, McCoy bolted through the right side of the line, broke to the sideline and then spun past charging cornerback Malcolm Jenkins, who came up with nothing.

Seven minutes later, McCoy found Cosby in the back of the end zone to put the Longhorns up 17-6.

"He is strong-willed and he is a guy that's very confident, and he never thinks he is going to lose," Brown said.

Chargers' Tomlinson could be sidelined Sunday by 'tough' injury

SAN DIEGO (AP)—There was the strained groin in 2004, the lingering rib injury in 2005, a jaw injury in 2006, the knee injury in last year's playoffs and then his jammed right big toe earlier this season.

Now there's the groin injury that's dogging LaDainian Tomlinson to the point that he might have to sit out the San Diego Chargers' playoff game at Pittsburgh on Sunday.

The star running back isn't sure if a week's worth of treatment and rest is going to be enough to allow him to play.

"I don't know. It's tough," Tomlinson said after the Chargers' light workout on Monday. "This is a tough injury. I would probably venture to say it's probably the toughest of my career. We'll see what happens."

The injury, sustained in the final regular-season game, robbed Tomlinson of his burst and shiftiness to the point that he came out of Saturday night's 23-17 overtime wild-card win over the Indianapolis Colts after scoring on a 3-yard run early in the second quarter.

Speedy little Darren Sproles took over after that. Sproles had 328 all-purpose yards, including the winning 22-yard touchdown run.

The Chargers say Tomlinson has a strained groin. There have been reports he has a detached tendon.

L.T. chose not to clarify the situation.

"I won't because it is a medical issue and different doctors have their opinions," he said. "I'll leave it at that."

If a week's worth of treatment and strengthening exercise go well, Tomlinson could test the groin before the game on Sunday, as he did before Saturday night's game. But he also said there's a chance he could be ruled out of the game before Sunday arrives. "I'm pretty sure at some point I'll try it to see where I am. Then we'll see what happens. That's why we're leaving it as day-to-day and just see how it reacts."

Tomlinson hurt his left knee in last year's divisional-round upset win at Indianapolis, then aggravated it early in the AFC championship game at New England. He stood on the sideline for the final 3 1/2 quarters of the 21-12 loss to the Patriots.

Tomlinson had the lowest output of his brilliant eight-year career just two seasons after winning the league MVP award, setting records with 31 touchdowns and 186 points, and winning the first of two straight rushing titles.

He said he felt nervous standing on the sideline Saturday night.

"I think the thing that's toughest to me is knowing I have no control. I can't make any plays out there for the team. That's the hardest thing for me. I haven't been in that position too much where I just had to stand over there and watch."

Tomlinson said he was proud of Sproles.

"Anytime a guy gets an opportunity, you want him to do well, especially when it's one of your guys and you're all out for the same goal. We always talk about how we're going to need each other and it's not more important than it is now. We definitely need him."

Besides Sproles, the Chargers have Michael Bennett, a late-season pickup, and rookie Jacob Hester.

NFL BRIEFS

Report: Patriots to put franchise tag on Cassel

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)—The New England Patriots plan to put the franchise tag on quarterback Matt Cassel, according to a published report. Cassel's future hinges heavily on Tom Brady's recovery from a season-ending knee injury in the first game this season. Franchising Cassel would keep him from becoming an unrestricted free agent and give the Patriots an option if they feel Brady might not be ready for the start of the 2009 season. If they're confident that Brady will be ready, they'd be able to trade Cassel. The Patriots' plan for Cassel was first reported by the National Football Post. "It's been talked about quite a bit (publicly)," Patriots spokesman Stacey James said Monday. "We won't be commenting on it until something happens. And if we don't use it (the tag), we probably won't comment." David Dunn, Cassel's agent, did not return telephone calls seeking comment. Without a franchise tag, Cassel would become an unrestricted free agent starting Feb. 27. The period in which a team can designate a franchise player is Feb. 5 to Feb. 19. A team can put the franchise tag on one player a year. It would have to pay that player at least the minimum of the average of the five highest salaries of players at the same position, estimated at $14 million for Cassel.

Boldin has strained hamstring, status uncertain

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP)—Arizona wide receiver Anquan Boldin has a strained left hamstring and his status is uncertain for Saturday night's NFC divisional playoff game at Carolina. "We'll see how it goes this week," coach Ken Whisenhunt said at his Monday news conference. Boldin was injured on a 71-yard touchdown pass from Kurt Warner in the second quarter of Arizona's 30-24 wild-card playoff victory over the Atlanta Falcons last Saturday. He returned to play one more series, then limped off the field for good. "When you're dealing with hamstrings you just never know," Whisenhunt said. "I've seen guys that have come back and played a couple of days later, I've seen guys who are out three or four weeks." Boldin was voted to his third Pro Bowl this season despite missing four games with injuries. Steve Breaston would move up to starting wide receiver along with Larry Fitzgerald if Boldin can't play. Jerheme Urban probably would be the No. 3 receiver, with rookie Early Doucet possibly seeing some playing time. Whisenhunt said he thought the hamstring injury was related to Boldin's inability to practice at full speed for the final two weeks of the regular season because of a shoulder injury.

Nuggets beat Pacers, Carmelo injured

DENVER (AP)—Carmelo Anthony scored 21 points and had a season-high nine assists despite suffering a "probable" fracture in his right hand in the Denver Nuggets' 135-115 victory over the Indiana Pacers on Monday night.

The team, which described the injury as a "probable" fracture, said it doesn't know how much time Anthony will miss. He's going to see a specialist Tuesday.

Anthony injured his hand when the ball was slapped away early in the third quarter. He continued playing, but frequently grabbed at his hand. He had the Nuggets trainer check it out a few times when play stopped and then left for good late in the fourth quarter.

"It's sore and stiff right now," said Anthony, whose hand was numb for most of the second half.

Kenyon Martin scored 25 points and Chauncey Billups scored 13 of his 24 points in the final quarter for the Nuggets, who have now won four in a row. They set a season-high in points against the Pacers. Their previous best was 132 against Toronto in early December.

Denver is 24-12 after 36 games, matching the Nuggets' best start since their first year in the NBA in 1976-77.

Danny Granger had 36 points, the most scored against the Nuggets this season. He's now scored 30 or more points 10 times this season.

Troy Murphy added 15 points and 12 rebounds, while Jarrett Jack contributed 17.

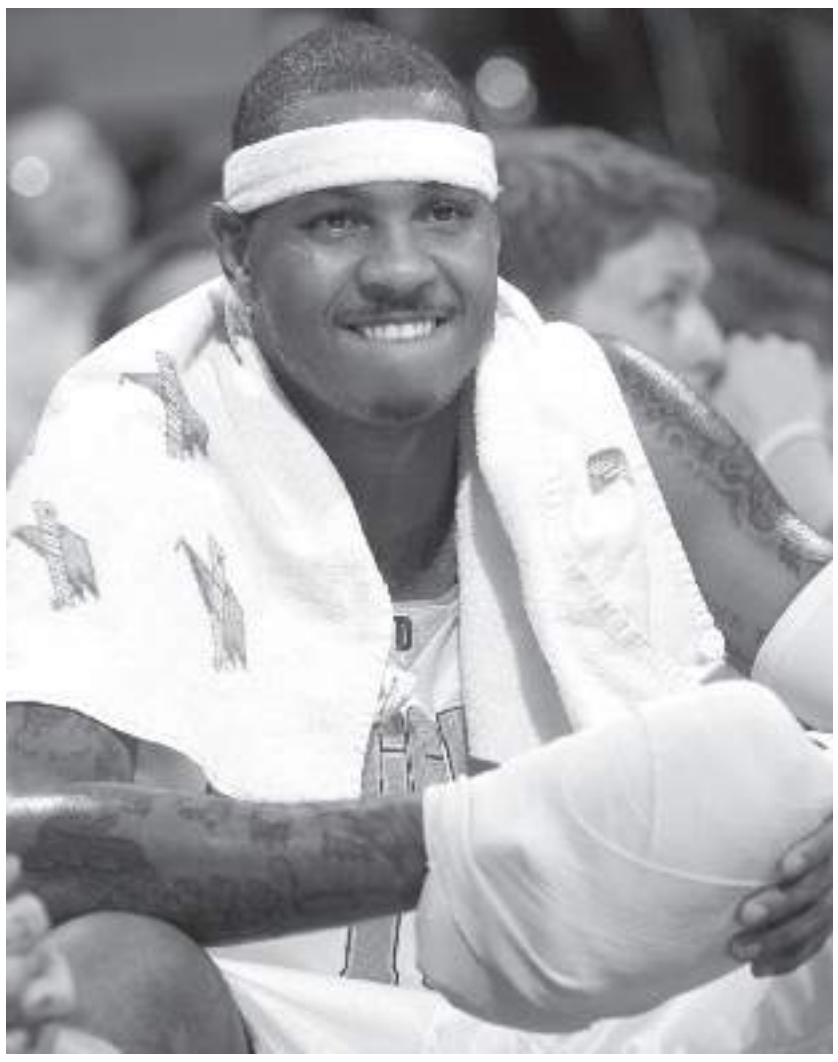
Denver led by as many as 20 points early in the game, only to see the Pacers tie it at 80 on Granger's layup in the third quarter. Anthony restored the lead on a 10-foot turnaround jumper the next time down the court, and the Nuggets wouldn't relinquish the advantage.

They outscored the Pacers 38-23 in the final quarter.

The All-Star forward missed three games last month with a bruised right elbow.

Billups added 11 assists and went 8-for-8 from the line.

There was plenty of chirping at the officials in the first half as Jim O'Brien, Linas Kleiza, Anthony and George Karl all drew technicals for arguing.



AP

Denver Nuggets forward Carmelo Anthony holds his right wrist after it was wrapped in an ice pack after he was hit going up for a shot against the Indiana Pacers in the third quarter of the Nuggets' 135-115 victory in an NBA basketball game in Denver on Monday, Jan. 5, 2009.

O'Brien's rant late in the first quarter sparked the Pacers, who got off to a sluggish start, falling into a 20-point hole.

Indiana rallied to pull to 74-70 at halftime. Granger led the surge, scoring 26 first-half points, tying him with Memphis rookie O.J. Mayo for the most points in a half against Denver this season.

With his second 3-pointer of the first half, J.R. Smith moved into fourth on the Nuggets" all-time list, passing Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf (371). Smith finished with 10 points.

The Pacers may soon have Mike Dunleavy back on the court, possibly even Wednesday at Phoenix.

Dunleavy has been out all season with a right knee injury. O'Brien said Dunleavy's minutes will be closely monitored once he returns.

Nets 98, Kings 90

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Vince Carter scored 29 points, and Yi Jianlian added 22 points and a season-high 13 rebounds as New Jersey handed Sacramento its 11th straight road loss.

Jarvis Hayes had a go-ahead 3-pointer with 4:53 to play as the Nets won consecutive games at home for the first time this season. New Jersey won despite playing the second half without point guard Devin Harris, who aggravated a hamstring injury before the break.

Kevin Martin, who scored 45 on Saturday night, had 36 points for the woeful Kings (8-27).

Spurs 91, Heat 84

At Miami, Tim Duncan had 19 points and nine rebounds as the Southwest Division-leading San Antonio beat Miami for its third straight win.

San Antonio put five players in double figures, ran out to a quick 10-point lead and shot 59 percent in the fourth quarter to put the game away.

George Hill scored 15 points for the Spurs, who got 11 points from both Roger Mason and Matt Bonner and 10 from Manu Ginobili.

Dwyane Wade had 24 points and 12 assists—his eighth double-double of the season—for the Heat, who also got 15 points from Shawn Marion. Michael Beasley had 15 points and 12 rebounds for his first double-double with Miami.

Bucks 107, Raptors 97

At Milwaukee, Michael Redd had a season-high 35 points and Charlie Villanueva scored 13 of his 25 in the fourth quarter to lead Milwaukee to its first win without Andrew Bogut in 21 months.

Milwaukee, which finished the game on a 13-0 run, lost its previous nine games—including four this season—without Bogut, the former No. 1 pick who missed his second straight game Monday with back spasms.

The Raptors, playing without center Jermaine O'Neal and guard Jose Calderon on this two-game road trip, turned to Chris Bosh, who had 31 points and 11 rebounds to help Toronto hold the lead through most of three quarters.

Andrea Bargnani had 21 points and Anthony Parker finished with 12 for Toronto.

Jazz 119, Warriors 114

At Salt Lake City, Deron Williams had 25 points and 15 assists and Ronnie Brewer scored seven crucial points down the stretch as Utah held off Golden State.

Williams tied his season high in assists as the Jazz led most of the way but could never break the game open from the Warriors, despite the loss of Stephen Jackson to a hamstring injury at the end of the first half. Neither team led by more than nine in the run-and-gun contest.

Jamal Crawford scored 28 points and Maggette had 23 points in his return but the Warriors have now lost four of five games and were winless on their three-game road trip.

Bradley, Cubs agree to $30M, 3-yr deal

CHICAGO (AP)—The Chicago Cubs and free agent Milton Bradley reached a preliminary agreement Monday on a $30 million, three-year contract, according to a person familiar with the negotiations. The deal is subject to a physical scheduled for Thursday, the person said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the deal had not been finalized.

Adding Bradley was one of the top priorities this offseason for the Cubs, who got swept out of the playoffs for the second straight year after a lineup loaded with right-handers struggled against the Los Angeles Dodgers.

A switch-hitter, Bradley batted .321 with 22 homers for Texas while leading the American League with a .436 on-base percentage. He made the All-Star team while serving primarily as a designated hitter.

In Chicago, he'll fill the Cubs' need for a left-handed bat in the middle of the order and will be used mostly in right field even though he has played 100 games in the field just once—in 2004 with the Dodgers. The Cubs will likely spell him with Kosuke Fukudome, who also will platoon with Reed Johnson in center. Fukudome was in right field last season.

Chicago general manager Jim Hendry declined comment.

The Cubs led the National League with 855 runs during the regular season before the Dodgers outscored them 20-6 in the playoffs. It was no secret Chicago wanted to balance its batting order, and Bradley should complement right-handed sluggers such as Alfonso Soriano, Derrek Lee and Aramis Ramirez.

The agreement with Bradley came after the Cubs dealt versatile Mark DeRosa, a right-handed hitter, to Cleveland on Wednesday following an agreement to sign switch-hitter Aaron Miles.

Now they've added Bradley to the mix, hoping he can help them advance in the postseason and, ultimately, win their first championship since 1908. But they're taking a calculated gamble.

The Cubs will be the seventh team for Bradley, who has a history of behavioral issues.

He slammed a plastic bottle at the feet of a fan in the right-field seats at Dodger Stadium in 2004 after someone threw it on the field, drawing a five-game suspension. With San Diego in the pennant chase in 2007, he tore the ACL in his right knee when he was spun to the ground by Padres manager Bud Black, who was trying to keep him from umpire Mike Winters. Bradley claimed he was baited by Winters, who was suspended for the final five days of the regular season and didn't work the postseason.

Bradley also got a four-game suspension for tossing a bag of balls onto the field after an ejection. And when he was with Cleveland, he had a dugout confrontation with Indians manager Eric Wedge during spring training in 2004 before getting traded to Los Angeles.

Burrell agrees to $16M, two-year deal with Rays

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Pat Burrell went from one World Series team to the other. The Tampa Bay Rays added a big bat to the middle of their lineup, agreeing Monday on a $16 million, two-year contract with Burrell.

The 32-year-old slugger spent the past nine seasons with the Philadelphia Phillies, who defeated the Rays in the World Series a little more than two months ago.

"At the end of last year, obviously I got a chance to know the team pretty well," said Burrell, who hit .250 with 33 homers, 33 doubles, 86 RBIs and 102 walks in a career-high 157 games in 2008.

"Coming into free agency, the thing that was most important to me was to go somewhere I thought had as good a chance or better to repeat and go back to the World Series, or at least get into the playoffs."

A .257 career hitter with 251 homers and 827 RBIs, Burrell has averaged 31 homers, 99 RBIs and 103 walks over the past four seasons. He was the everyday left fielder in Philadelphia, but Tampa Bay plans to use him mostly at designated hitter.

One of the Rays' top priorities was to add a power hitter to a lineup that also features Carlos Pena, Evan Longoria, B.J. Upton and Carl Crawford.

The club looked at some left-handed hitters, including Jason Giambi, but Burrell appeared a better fit from the start, especially considering Tampa Bay struggled against left-handed pitching last season.

"He solidifies the middle of our already potent lineup," vice president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman said.

"We weren't just singularly focused on a right-handed hitter, but it certainly is an advantage for us in terms of the way our lineup stacks up currently. We feel like any time you can add a hitter like Pat to the middle of the lineup, we're a much-improved team today than we were at the end of last season."

Although the financial commitment to Burrell pales in comparison to what the AL East rival New York Yankees and other teams will wind up spending in free agency, it's a bold move for a club that had one of the lowest payrolls in baseball in 2008.

Friedman didn't close the door on the possibility of making more moves this winter, but he conceded the addition of Burrell "will dramatically hinder our flexibility going forward."

"We're going to continue to monitor what's going on and try to figure out if there's the right fit," Friedman said. "It's just about getting creative and seeing if there are ways we can continue to improve.

"But as we stand, we feel like we have a better team than we had last year. We feel like our pitching and defense will remain strong, and we feel like our lineup has gotten a lot better. We're happy where we are, but we're never content."

Burrell, who has lived the past few offseasons in nearby Clearwater, said he felt fortunate to have played in Philadelphia as long as he did. At the same time, he's excited about the challenge of helping a young team realize its potential.

"I think this team is going to competitive for a long time. ... As a little bit older player ... I'm here to help," Burrell said. "Anything and everything I can to help this team win, I'll do."

Trench Tech teaming up with Miller Lite

Trench Tech, Inc. presidentCukiAlvarez announced last Monday that Trench Tech has transferred major sponsorship and presenter rights over to Miller Lite for 2009 and 2010.

"Miller Lite's sponsorship presents a fantastic opportunity for both Trench Tech, Inc. and the mixed martial arts sport in the CNMI as a whole," Alvarez said. "Sports fans in the CNMI and throughout the region can look forward to an incredible season with the very best that MMA has to offer."

The Miller Lite logo will take over the prime position in the center of the Octagon beginning with the upcoming Rites of Passage VI: Conviction scheduled for Jan. 24.

"To highlight our new partnership with Miller Lite and to accommodate the crowds that we expect for the kick-off event of 2009, we'll be holding the upcoming Rites of Passage in the ballroom at the World Resort, rather than the Trench Tech Gym in Afetnas. Every fan that shows up will be a VIP to this historic event," adds Alvarez. "The card that has been set for the event is also a step up from the norm. We have included four main events with fighters who earned their rights to be in the ring long ago—but once again, this is a new year and we are going to set the bar a lot higher from here on out."

"This January, a new heavyweight, Miller Lite, will enter the Trench Tech Octagon, and everyone will win," said Charles Cepeda general manager of Pacific Trading Co., the official Miller Lite Distributor. "In addition to high-end MMA matches slated for the next two years, we are planning a few twists and surprises for the schedule that will thrill sports fans throughout the islands."

Under the two-year agreement, Miller Lite will be the main presenter and exclusive beer sponsor for all Trench Warz events, and the co-main presenter (with Docomo Pacific) and exclusive beer sponsor and for all Rites of Passage events.

"Pacific Trading is also providing sub-sponsorship from our non-alcoholic brands, Pepsi and Monster Energy" adds Cepeda. "The sport appeals to the masses and adding these brands to the events gives Trench Tech Inc. a wider range of beverage tie-ins. Pepsi is the No. 1 cola in the CNMI and Monster is a perfect fit for a high energy sport like MMA."

"Thanks largely to the efforts of Cuki Alvarez and Trench Tech, Inc., MMA is here to stay," observed Glen Hunter, PTC sales manager. "Mixed martial arts is one of the only truly professional spectator sports in the CNMI. As most people are already aware, Miller Lite is a huge supporter of MMA in the Pacific. Alvarez and his team are as passionate about the sport as we are, and through this partnership we can expect two years of spectacular performances and continued growth of mixed martial arts in the CNMI, and throughout the region.

"We now have the Ultimate Light Beer sponsoring the ultimate MMA organization in the CNMI," said Randy Taylor, TTI vice president. "Securing Miller Lite's support is just an extraordinary break for us, the fighters, and most importantly the fans."

"Promotional opportunities like this one don't come around every day," said Miller Lite marketing manager, Mike Babauta "Trench Tech, Inc. has proven to be immensely popular with our demographic, and the buzz generated by our partnership with Trench Tech, Inc. will advance our brand strategy. Throughout our sponsorship we will give MMA fans a chance to win MMA gear, Trench Tech event tickets, flyaway packages to PXC events in Guam, and more. We look forward to two amazing years."

Rites of Passage VI: Conviction is scheduled for Jan. 24 at the World Resort Ballroom at 6pm. Tickets will be available starting next week at Docomo Pacific, Pacific Trading Co., Borderline, The 6-7-Zero Rocksteady Shop, Kagman Mobil, and Hannam Market for a flat fee of $20. Information regarding the weigh-in and after party will be made available shortly.

Trench Tech is the CNMI's leading mixed martial arts organization and the only organization that offers a consistent premier series of MMA sporting events throughout the year.

Trench Tech owned and operated by Cuki Alvarez and Randy Taylor and is based at the Afetna Gym in Saipan. For any and all information regarding MMA in general or for interested participants, call Cuki at (670) 483-4MMA. ***(PR)***

SML to discuss '09 plans in meeting tonight

Saipan Major League will be holding an organizational meeting tonight at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium to discuss the calendar of events for this year.

SML's Tony Rogolifoi said the meeting is set for 7pm.

Agenda will include the opening of the 2009 Budweiser SML and upcoming tournaments in Guam.

The 2008 season of the SML saw Rock Steady (formerly Bud Kings) outlast the Ford Rangers in the most stretched out championship series in the history of the league.

The title series was only a best-of-five affair, but it took Rock Steady and the Ford Rangers almost three weeks to wrap up the finals due to the uncooperative weather and the rolling power outages then.

Rock Steady won the series after sweeping the last two games. The eventual 2008 champion lost Game 1 and 3 and won Game 2 via forfeit when the Rangers failed to bring enough players at the resumption of the power outage-halted match at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

Besides the local league, SML is expected to discuss preparations for the 2008 Masters Baseball Tournament, which Guam will be hosting.

The Masters tournament in Guam will also feature teams from the Philippines and Hawaii, and possibly Australia. ***(Roselyn B. Monroyo)***

COOPER

From Page 28

and Pac Pacific meets. Double A time is for South Pacific Games and Mini SPG, while an A time is for Micronesian Games only.

Wong's 2:30.54 mark in the 200m breaststroke (another CNMI record) is also under the Four As time (2:35.00).

Staal's CNMI mark in the boys' 13 to 14 (2:07.15) makes the Triple A time (2:09.46), while his 25.68 seconds in the 50m split in the 200m freestyle relay in the All Schools meet in November falls in the Four As mark (26 seconds).

Staal's 57.46 seconds in the 100m freestyle makes the Triple A qualifying time range (58.66 seconds).

The Pan Pacific meet in Guam is expected to draw 15 swimming federations from Japan, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, China, Trinidad & Tobago, Mexico, Guatemala, Mongolia, Hong Kong, Macau, and Palau.

The pool competitions in the Pan Pacific Swimming Championships from Jan. 7 to 11 will be held at the Leo Palace Resort, while the open water swim on Jan. 12 will take place at Tumon Bay.

The 18-and-under tournament is a prestigious event with its previous competitors including winningest Olympian Michael Phelps, Liesel Jones, Brendan Hansen, Natalie Coughlin, and Kosuke Kitajima.

BANMI

From Page 28

the Finals MVP honors.

The youth league took a two-year absence giving way to the Northern Youth Basketball Association, which in 2007 held a 16-and-under league at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Last year, there was hardly a league for 16-and-under or 14-and-under players, and these youth cagers resorted to competing in short and occasional tournaments.

Some, including the Sonics, were forced to compete in the Rotary caging, which is a playground for 18-and-under players. The results were disastrous for younger and inexperience 14-and-under players, as they were outplayed by much older foes and were the first ones to get to the exit door in the annual league.

"The result was a mismatch. What could you expect from a 14-year-old and inexperienced player going up against an 18-year-old, whose level of play and skills is definitely on a higher level," said Sonics coach Jesse Tudela, who is among the coaches batting for the revival of the 14-and-under league."

"But we don't have a choice, but to let them play in the Rotary because there's no league for them. There are a lot of 14-and-under players joining our team, and we can't just let them play among themselves. There has to be a competition somewhere," Tudela said.

He added that the best venue to train youth cagers is through the 14-and-under caging.

"This is where you develop their skills and teach them the right attitude towards the game. Kids in the 10-and-under age group play just for the fun of playing, but in the 14 to 16 age group, it's different. At this stage, playing competitive basketball comes into play," Tudela said.

"Once their skills are developed, they are now ready to step up to the 18-and-under, and then slowly move up to the open league," the Sonics coach added.

Meanwhile, Rangamar said they are hoping to hold separate tournaments in the IVYBL for teams in the northern and southern sides of the island.

Rangamar said this move is for cost- and time-saving measures.

"At the end of the regular season, the top teams in each division will play in the playoffs to determine the overall champion," Rangamar said.

CUC

From Page 28

enth inning, scored the winning run on a Sam Decena single.

Nadia Saralu scored on a Rosel Magofna sacrifice fly at the top of the last inning to put DCCA in the lead, 10-9.

At the bottom of the seventh, pitcher Dolorina Panuelo led off for CUC, singled, and later scored on a Mel Camacho single.

Palacios batted second, singled, and advanced to second on third batter Annabelle Magofna's sacrifice fly.

With two outs and Palacios on third, Decena stepped up to the plate and connected on the winning hit.

DCCA absorbed its second straight loss and dropped to a 3-3 record.

As a consolation, DCCA performed better at-bat going 18-for-39 for a .462 batting average. CUC went 18-for-40 for a .450 batting average.

Evelyn Kani and Semi Simrani both hit 3-for-4 at the plate with the former making four RBIs, a double, and triple, and the latter recording three RBIs.

MEN'S
DCCA 22, Law & Order 2

In the men's division, DCAA kept its unbeaten record cruising to its ninth straight win following a 22-2 demolition of Law & Order.

DCCA allowed Law & Order to score only at the bottom of the fifth inning.

First baseman Joey Dela Cruz had an awesome performance at-bat for the defending champion, hitting three straight homers for six RBIs. He tripled in his fourth at-bat for a perfect 4-for-4 stint at the plate. Pitcher Mel Sakisat and third baseman Pete Tomokane also made one homer apiece and combined for five RBIs. Jun Saralu and James Fleming both went 3-for-3 at-bat with the latter recording three RBIs.

Catcher Albert Hicking scored for Law & Order on a Patrick Diaz single, while Ben Lisua made the other run on a DCCA shortstop error.

Law & Order absorbed its sixth loss in nine games.

In the other men's game, Commonwealth Ports Authority won via forfeit against CHC.

The victory was CPA's seventh in eight games helping the team keep the No. 2 spot in the team standings. CHC dropped to a 2-6 slate.

NMASA

From Page 28

lifting the Hafa Adai Express to the league's first championship. His second MVP award came in 1986 and he later won the Finals MVP in 1993 and 1994. In 1995, he took the MVP honors in the Mobil Games and led CNMI to its first-ever regional baseball championship.

Meanwhile, tomorrow's NMASA meeting is set for 7pm at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Agenda include the selection of Athletes and Student Athletes of the Month and updates about the Mini South Pacific Games in the Cook Islands this year and the Micronesian Games in Palau in 2010.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	29	6	.829	_
New Jersey	17	18	.486	12
New York	13	19	.406	14 1/2
Toronto	14	21	.400	15
Philadelphia	13	20	.394	15

Southeast Division

Orlando	26	8	.765	_
Atlanta	22	11	.667	3 1/2
Miami	18	15	.545	7 1/2
Charlotte	12	22	.353	14
Washington	7	25	.219	18

Central Division

Cleveland	27	6	.818	_
Detroit	21	11	.656	5 1/2
Milwaukee	17	19	.472	11 1/2
Chicago	14	20	.412	13 1/2
Indiana	12	22	.353	15 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	23	11	.676	_
New Orleans	20	10	.667	1
Dallas	20	13	.606	2 1/2
Houston	21	14	.600	2 1/2
Memphis	11	23	.324	12

Northwest Division

Denver	24	12	.667	_
Portland	20	14	.588	3
Utah	19	15	.559	4
Minnesota	8	25	.242	14 1/2
Oklahoma City	4	30	.118	19

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	27	5	.844	_
Phoenix	19	12	.613	7 1/2
Golden State	10	25	.286	18 1/2
L.A. Clippers	8	25	.242	19 1/2
Sacramento	8	27	.229	20 1/2

Yesterday's Games

San Antonio 91, Miami 84
New Jersey 98, Sacramento 90
Milwaukee 107, Toronto 97
Utah 119, Golden State 114
Denver 135, Indiana 115

By The Associated Press

LOCAL SCORES

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Men's Division

DCCA	9	0
CPA	7	1
Freedom Air	6	1
Beach Boys	6	1
No Zone	6	2
Joeten Motors	6	2
Legislature	5	3
DLNR	4	3
Docomo	4	4
POI	3	3
P & S	3	3
DEQ/CRM	3	5
Law & Order	3	6
PSS	2	4
Customs	2	5
CHC	2	6
CUC	2	6
PIC	1	5
Hopwood	0	7
Mayors	0	7

Women's Division

NMC	7	0
DCCA	3	3
CUC	2	4
Finance	2	4
CHC	1	4

SBA Budweiser Open 8-Ball League

PHOTOS by
ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Bud Cup champion Docomo Krystal Hustlers pose with their supporters during the awards banquet at Charley's Cabaret at the Pacific Islands Club.

SBA Budweiser Open 8-Ball League winner PTI Voyagers.

Agingan division MVP Jojo Talibong of the PTI Voyagers.

Nolan Cultura of Primo's Home Boys with his MVP award in the Obyan division.

Two members of Coral Reef Shark Attack receive the Sportsmanship Award in the Agingan division.

Coral Reef Barracuda wins the Sportsmanship Award in the Obyan division.

Members of USSP Fotten Palau pose for a group photo with their third place trophy in the Obyan division of the Budweiser Open 8-Ball League.

Primo's Home Boys celebrate upon receiving the championship trophy in the Bud Cup.

Round 2's Islanders Rent A Car with their third place trophy in the Agingan division of the Budweiser Open 8-Ball League.

Members of Godfather's Rock Steady pose for Saipan Tribune before their game against the Docomo Hustlers in the Bud Cup.

Texas rallies past Ohio State in Fiesta

Left out of the national title game, Colt McCoy and Texas made the most of their trip to the Fiesta Bowl.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Trench Tech teaming up with Miller Lite

Trench Tech, Inc. president Cuki Alvarez announced last Monday that Trench Tech has transferred major sponsorship and presenter rights over to Miller Lite for 2009 and 2010.

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Cooper, Shin also going to Guam

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Tsunami Saipan

Cooper Graf and Shin Kimura will be participating in the 2009 Junior Pan Pacific Championships too, joining fellow Tsunami Saipan swimmers Rezne Wong and Kai Staal in the meet Guam is hosting for six days.

This developed after Tsunami Saipan coach Hiro Kimura received an invitation from Japan Swimming Federation asking the CNMI to send a relay team for exhibition races in the JPP meet. JSF is co-hosting the 2009 Junior Pan Pacific Championships, which will run from Jan. 7 to 12, with Guam Swimming Federation.

"With this short notice, we summoned Cooper and Shin to join Rezne and Kai in the 800m freestyle relay team. They are the Top 4 freestyle swimmers on the island," Kimura said.

Originally, the CNMI was supposed to send only two swimmers in Guam, as only Wong and Staal made the qualifying times.

Wong' s CNMI National Record in the 100m breaststroke (1:10:21) is past the Four As in GSF standard (1:11.52).

Swimmers who get Four As time are allowed to join in the World Championships and Pan Pacific Championships. Triple A time will give swimmers entries to the East Asia, Oceania Junior,

See COOPER on Page 26

Graf

Wong

Staal

Kimura

BANMI set to revive village youth caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

BANMI Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands

Discussions regarding the revival of the Island-wide Village Youth Basketball League have been ongoing to give 14-and-under players a venue to showcase their talents.

Basketball Association of Northern Mariana Islands president Elias Rangamar in a telephone interview said they are working with the Division of Sports and Recreation and coaches from various villages to bring IVYBL back.

The last IVYBL was held in 2006 with the G-Rollers I slipping past the San Antonio Sixers I in the finals, 42-40. Matt Duenas of the Sixers I was named regular season MVP, while Jericho Cruz, who is now among the top players of the CNMI Junior National Team, claimed

See BANMI on Page 26

The Sixers I's Nevin Salem barrels through the defense of the Lil' Sonics' Joel Chan during their title game in the 14-and-under division of the BANMI-organized Holiday Hoops last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. BANMI is planning to revive a league for 14-and-under players.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

NMASA: Still no HoF nominations

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Time is running out for local sports federations wanting to submit nominations for the CNMI Sports Hall of Fame.

With only one day left before the Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association holds its first monthly meeting for 2009, NMASA president Michael White said no nominations have been submitted.

Selection for the 2009 inductee to the CNMI Sports Hall of Fame is supposed to be made in tomorrow's NMASA meeting.

But with no nominations yet with only a day left before the selection, it seemed no new member of the CNMI Hall of Fame will be inducted early this year at the NMASA Awards Banquet.

For sports federations that will still submit nominations, these should be made in writing discussing briefly the nominee's achievements and other valuable information worthy of naming him to the elite group.

Nominees can be athletes, coaches, administrators, or officials who are U.S. citizens or have achieved distinction as a CNMI representative. He/she must also have resided in the Commonwealth for a minimum of 10 years and is in the 35-and-above age group. Coaches and administrators must have been active in their respective sports for 15 years or more.

White in an earlier email to the *Saipan Tribune* said "it is important for the CNMI sporting community to recognize those among us who have excelled in sports. As the 'best of the best', members of the CNMI Sports Hall of Fame serve as examples to all who participate in sports, and as role models to our youth and to those who will come after them."

The recent inductee to the CNMI Sports Hall of Fame was pitcher Tony Benavente.

Benavente held a 61-17 record in the Saipan Major League for 18 years. He is SML's lifetime career leader in strikeouts with 816.

Benavente won his first most valuable player award in 1982 after

See NMASA on Page 26

CUC starts first streak in women's softball

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Budweiser Softball League

The long break gave Commonwealth Utilities Corp. enough power to stun defending champion Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, 11-10, at the resumption of action in the women's division of the 2008 Inter Government/ Business Softball League Monday at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Ballfield.

The victory was second in a row for CUC and it was the team's first string of victories following a 0-4 start. CUC won its first game against Finance, 12-2, on Dec. 1 and the former had not played since then. CUC was set to face Commonwealth Health Center on Dec. 19 before the league took a holiday break, but the match was called off and was rescheduled for last night.

Jenny Palacios, who replaced Roquita Norita at the bottom of the sev-

See CUC on Page 26